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*Edited by* STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

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## A Moment in Budapest

[François Bondy, editor of our sister review in Paris, "Preuves," telephoned us the following report from Vienna on Monday, November 5th.]

ON THE day I left Budapest—the 2nd of November—most of the foreign journalists crowding the lobby of the Hotel Duna were keenly aware of impending tragedy and disaster. The spokesman for the revolutionary military committee had already forecast, the evening before, the eventuality of "a fight to the death." But on that Friday morning the atmosphere at the office of the Hungarian Writers' Association, next door to the Soviet Embassy, had been entirely different. There, everything was intense and hopeful: a moving and strange air of exhilaration pervaded the rooms. Most of Hungary's distinguished writers were there, working and conferring, for their literary centre was functioning as a kind of brain-trust for Prime Minister Nagy. I listened to the discussions of new plans for reconstruction and education, for various publishing projects, and for a new issue of the literary journal, *Irodalmi Ujság*, which was due to come off the presses in a few hours.

Through an interpreter (for he does not speak any foreign languages) I talked with Peter Veres, Chairman of the Writers' Association, a famous peasant writer and political leader, who stood there with his old-fashioned heavy boots and handle-bar moustache like some Hungarian Gorki. "We have learned that an author must have the right to keep his silence on political issues, as well as the freedom to speak out on behalf of his community. . . ." As he spoke to me, a peasant from the region of Győr was announced. He

tramped in with mud on his boots. He came to ask Veres to get him a publisher for a long manuscript on which he had spent "many, many nights." Veres told him that this, under the circumstances, would have to wait. There was a brief argument. The farmer went into a corner, sulking and muttering. Veres went on to ask me not to publish any complete verbatim accounts of his remarks because "I am, after all, a writer and it is so rare that the spoken word can have style. . . ."

On this last morning, I met again the playwright Julius Hay, in whose house I had spent the previous afternoon. Madame Hay, who is a member of one of the Budapest theatre groups, told me how happy she was that her husband's new play, which had been suppressed by the censorship, would be produced as soon as "the patriotic strike of the actors" was over. I asked Hay how it was that he and other "old Bolsheviks" were now openly fighting the Party leadership. He replied: "There were many reasons for the break. The first, I confess, was my instinctive disgust with Stalinism's utter lack of taste and its insensibility in every field of art and letters. As writers, we were all sharply aware of that. Secondly, there was the experience of deep social injustice in our society. A third motive was the glaring failure, even bankruptcy, of our type of economic system. There was finally—and it may have been the most important element—the pressure of our youth. . . ."

"We writers," Hay explained to me, "have always thought of ourselves as the *avant-garde* in the struggle for freedom. This is a Hungarian tradition of which we are very proud. . . . I was supposed to be a guide for our youth, but in reality, the youth had be-

come a guide for me. For years I had been lecturing them. I gave interminable ideological answers to every question. I could feel that my young listeners found it all very shallow and boring. At first I thought: how strange and incomprehensible it is that we, the older generation, should work so selflessly to build the future of a happier Hungary for our young people, and that these very young people should not care at all! Why were they so blind, so unfeeling, so cold? Gradually I began to wonder. Were they all, every last boy and girl in Hungary, hopeless reactionaries? Or could it be that we, the old men, were wrong, and that they were right? I began to talk with more frankness. I looked at their problems with more openness. In my public meetings, which were attended by eager thousands, I forced myself to answer every question directly. Some weeks ago, they asked me at a meeting in Győr, 'What is happening in our uranium mines?' I knew the Russians were there, but could only answer: 'I just don't know. . . . But as a Hungarian citizen, I ought to know! And you ought to know! Keep asking!' And so they did."

He went on: "And as for me, I keep on asking too. Have we been building in this country a socialist society, marred only by some ugly distortions, or was this not a horrible régime for which I have no name and which was all distortions and no socialism? Even now, I long for the Party which once had our love and loyalty. But its leadership has destroyed it. It is difficult to love a thing which does not exist. I would still support a new and pure Marxist movement. But I would not want to become a Party member ever again. . . . Was I courageous in speaking for truth, even under Rakosi? The pressure of the young on us all was so great that I can only say, in the words of one of our poets, 'I was too much of a coward to remain dishonest!' . . ."

I talked, too, with Tibor Dery, an inspirer of the Petöfi circle of Hungarian intellectual

dissidents, and a Communist of long standing. I was surprised when he asked me to pass on greetings to one of his closest Viennese friends—a well-known Stalinist functionary who has never deviated from the Party line. Yet Tibor Dery told me, in his halting but perfect French, "*Cette révolution est la plus grande, la plus pure, que nous ayons connue. Peut-être sera-t-elle la première révolution victorieuse dans toute notre histoire!*"

MANY of the talks I had with Hungarian writers were recorded on tape by a Swiss radio reporter who travelled with me. In the safety of Vienna, while Budapest is still burning and armoured violence has taken command, while thousands of refugees are pouring across the Western frontier into Austria, I have listened again to these calm cultured voices, speaking to me in Hungarian, French, German, and Italian. And I am trying helplessly to relate these talks, held in a mood of revolutionary confidence, with the final SOS broadcast three days later from Radio Kossuth in Budapest, that desperate and pathetic appeal for help by the same Hungarian Writers' Association.

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*François Bondy*

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Michael Polanyi

## The Magic of Marxism

[AUTHOR'S PREFACE: *"The best Communist writers have decided—after many troubles, grave errors, and bitter spiritual struggles—that never again, under any conditions whatever, will they write lies in the future."* These indomitable words of the writer Julius Hay were published in a Hungarian literary journal on September 22nd, 1956. They reflect a bitter struggle of conscience, which in turn arises from an internal contradiction in the spirit of our age. It is the contradiction between two dominant passions. We are swayed by a moral dynamism which is without example in history; we demand justice, freedom, and brotherhood beyond all precedent. At the same time we are resolved to think scientifically; we have a passion for strict objectivity which is also without precedent in history.

These two passions are in a fundamental conflict. The scientific movement teaches that morality is but an expression of our material appetites and interests. Our passion for intellectual honesty tends to discredit our moral convictions, and to leave us a prey to insatiable self-doubt. The higher our standards of objectivity, the more searching is our questioning of our own morality. Thus, our thirst for righteousness is converted into a sullen nihilism.

Or, in order to put an end to this turmoil, we take refuge in a fanaticism that mechanically—albeit with considerable ingenuity—suppresses the conflict. Marxism has united the passions for objectivity and morality in its system; but its solution has proved unstable. The rise of Stalinism revealed the pathological propensities of Marxism. The revolt of Communist intellectuals in Eastern Europe, rebelling in the name of truth and natural human sentiments, provides manifest proof that Marxism has gravely misjudged man's real nature.

But the tension between modern high-powered scepticism and the unprecedented moral demands of the modern sceptic have also been harassing the West. This tension has undermined the assumptions which our liberalism has taken for granted, and has issued in a culture full of self-deprecation, bitterness, and despair. Words like those of Woodrow Wilson invoking the conscience of world opinion, which once set the hopes of Europe on fire, and which would seem, on the face of it, to have some relevance to events today, sound hollow to us. We have lost confidence in the class formulations of liberalism.

*The problem of modern man is to restore the balance between his critical powers and his moral demands—both of which are more relentless than ever before. This is our task for the next stage of history. During the past ten years writers of the West have made some progress towards it. We are now in a position to hope for the co-operation and assistance of the insurgent intellectuals in Communist countries. What poets, writers, and scholars, both inside and outside the Communist Party, have done in these countries during the past two years, commands our respect and gratitude. Their struggle has supplied us with new authentic support for our ideals. All those who found the intellectual atmosphere of Stalinism suffocating; all those who speak again the language of humanity, whether they think of themselves as Marxists or not—these are our friends and intellectual companions. The rise of their movement demonstrates the complete failure of the Communist governments to establish a separate cultural universe, and promises to restore the unity of intellectual standards throughout the world. We can enter the next stage of history together, in the consciousness that it presents both sides with the same problems, though in the different terms of our different antecedents.—M.P., October 28th.]*

NO REIGN of terror will fail to supplement its force by moral persuasion; and the more reasonable the arguments that are put forward, the more these will tend to gain ascendancy over the rulers' own behaviour. This would seem to demonstrate the inherent power of morality. But one may still doubt that the rulers of any society will ever observe moral claims further than is needed in order to move their subjects into trusting and following them. This doubt goes back to antiquity; in modern times it was first revived by Machiavelli. The German historian, Friedrich Meinecke, writing his *Die Idee der Staatsräson* at the close of the First World War, traced from Machiavelli—through a series of important thinkers—the steadily growing acceptance by Continental political theory of the necessary immorality of public power, both in ruling at home and in the conduct of foreign affairs. Meinecke himself saw the war in terms of a clash between a brutalised doctrine that equated Might with Right, and its moralising, hypocritical opponents who also believed that Might was Right but were clever enough not to say so. Yet he did not see that this war was but a ripple before the approaching storm. His account of the growth of the idea of *Realpolitik* does not even mention Marxism. So he could not suspect the total instability of moral principles

in politics which was to manifest itself in the revolutions of the 20th century.

The propagandistic appeal of Marxism is the most interesting case of what might be called the moral force of immorality. For it is the most precisely formulated system having such a paradoxical appeal, and this self-contradiction actually seems to supply the main impulse of the Marxian movement. Isaiah Berlin, in his biography of Marx, shows us Marx in the very act of exercising his propagandistic genius by means of this self-contradictory principle, his prophetic idealism spurning all reference to ideals:

The manuscripts of the numerous manifestoes, professions of faith, and programmes of action to which he appended his name, still bear the strokes of the pen and the fierce marginal comments, with which he sought to obliterate all references to eternal justice, the equality of man, the rights of individuals or nations, the liberty of conscience, the fight for civilisation, and other such phrases which were the stock-in-trade... of the democratic movements of his time; he looked upon these as so much worthless cant, indicating confusion of thought and ineffectiveness in action.

And well we know that it is not *in spite of* this contempt for justice, equality, and liberty, but *because of* it that Soviet Russia is accepted by many as the true champion of these same ideals, as against the very nations

openly professing them. As Hannah Arendt has rightly observed: "Bolshevik assurances inside and outside Russia that they do not recognise ordinary moral standards, have become a mainstay of Communist propaganda. . . ."—a propaganda that appeals to exactly these moral sentiments and moral standards.

Why should so contradictory a doctrine carry such supreme convincing power? The answer is, I believe, that it enables the modern mind, tortured by moral self-doubt, to indulge its moral passions in terms which also satisfy its passion for ruthless objectivity. Marxism, through its philosophy of "dialectical materialism," conjures away the opposition between the high moral dynamism of our age and our stern critical passion which demands that we see human affairs "objectively," i.e. as a mechanistic process. These dilemmas which make the liberal mind stagger and fumble are the joy and strength of Marxism: for the more inordinate our moral aspirations and the more completely amoral our objectivist outlook, the more powerful is a combination in which these contradictory principles mutually reinforce each other.

### *The Marxist Duality*

MARXISM achieves this sophisticated union by a primitive mental operation which Levy Brühl has called "participation." For primitive thought, in a lion tearing a villager to pieces there participates the man's envious neighbour; plagues and fatalities are always endowed with the evil intentions of someone who sent them. The higher religions, for their part, interpret misfortunes as God's retribution for past offences. More recently, historicism has replaced God by an Historic Necessity credited with the easier (if even more inscrutable) rôle of achieving what is historically fitting. In each case we have an active principle immanent in a manifest event; the relation between the immanent and the manifest being the same as between a purpose and its fulfilment, except that the connection is either supernatural or otherwise left undefined.

To this general type of operation—and in particular its modern variant, historicism—Marxism adds two features which greatly enhance its scope and convincing power. First, the active principle in this case is an aggregate of limitless moral demands, demands which have suddenly spread all over the globe, finding response even among millions of people who hitherto had lived in immemorial acceptance of exploitation and squalor—while at the same time, a strictly "scientific" verdict is invoked to identify the events which are to realise and fulfil these demands. Secondly, the mechanism of Marxism is amplified by working in two opposite and yet mutually correlated directions. In a class society, it is material interests which are regarded as immanent in moral aspirations; while in a socialist state, the opposite holds: morality is immanent in the material interests of "the proletariat."

This duality may look like yet another paradoxical feature of Marxism, but actually it can be seen to arise directly from the process by which immanent principles are injected into manifest events. To see this happening you must imagine that you are filled from the start—as Marx was—with a passion for Socialism and a horror of Capitalism. Looking in this light on the ideals of liberty, justice, brotherhood, you will observe, for example, that the Code Napoléon, based on these principles, was supremely effective in destroying the feudal order and in opening the way for the bourgeoisie with its system of private enterprise throughout Europe. You will also note that it has remained the guardian of the capitalist order ever since. Bourgeois ideals will appear therefore as a mere superstructure of capitalism, both in its opposition to a feudalism whose rule it has subverted and to the proletariat, whose enslavement it tries to perpetuate. Bourgeois interests will appear to be immanent in bourgeois moral ideals. This is the first kind of immanence; the *negative* branch of Marxism.

Of course, bourgeois professions of liberty, justice, humanity, etc. could be denounced as dishonest by the very criteria of these ideals,

as liberal reformers have so often denounced them. But this would jettison the prestige of a "scientific" analysis in favour of an argument which a "scientific" outlook deprecates as futile emotionalism. Scientific socialism must therefore rigorously expunge such verbiage from its statements—and this is what Marx fiercely insisted upon.

Think now, on the other hand, of Socialist revolutionary action. You are filled with a passionate desire to see the workers overthrow Capitalism and establish a realm of liberty, justice, and brotherhood. But you cannot demand this in the name of liberty, justice, and brotherhood, for you despise such emotionalism. So you must convert Socialism from a Utopia into a Science. You do so by affirming that the appropriation of the means of production by "the proletariat" will release a new flow of wealth and happiness, now entrained by Capitalism. This affirmation satisfies the moral aspirations of Socialism, and is accepted therefore as a scientific truth by those filled with these aspirations. Moral passions are thereby cast in the form of a scientific affirmation: this is the second kind of immanence, the *positive* branch of Marxism. By a scientific disguise, it protects moral sentiments against being deprecated as mere emotionalism, and gives them a sense of scientific certainty; while at the same time it impregnates material ends with the fervour of moral passions.

### *The Indestructible Fallacies*

ONE can now see that both branches of Marxism operate by denying to morality any intrinsic force of its own and yet they both appeal to moral passions. In the first case we are presented with an analysis of bourgeois ideals in terms of immanent bourgeois interests, and since the hidden motivation of this analysis is a condemnation of capitalism, the analysis turns into an unmasking of bourgeois hypocrisy. Because the analysis of moral claims in terms of material interests applies quite generally, it might be thought to discredit also the moral motives of those who do the unmasking. But these

motives are safe against unmasking, since they remain undeclared. Indeed, acting through the unmasking of bourgeois ideologies, they arouse powerful moral passions in others—without ever pronouncing any moral judgment; this propagandistic effect being achieved precisely by enunciating the unmasking in purely scientific terms, which are thus immune against suspicion of a moralising purpose.

These "scientific" assertions are, of course, accepted only because they satisfy certain moral passions. We have here a *self-confirmatory reverberation* between the *theory* of bourgeois ideologies and the concealed *motives* which underlie it. This is the characteristic structure of what I shall call a dynamo-objective coupling. Alleged scientific assertions which are accepted as such because they satisfy moral passions, will excite these passions further, and thus lend increased convincing power to the scientific affirmations in question—and so on, indefinitely. Moreover, such a dynamo-objective coupling is also potent in its own defence. Any criticism of its scientific part is rebutted by the moral passions behind it, while any moral objections to it are coldly brushed aside by invoking the inexorable verdict of its scientific findings. Each of the two components, the dynamic and the objective, takes it in turn to draw attention away from the other when it is under attack.

We can see that this structure underlies also the logical fallacy exposed by the academic critics of Marxism, and explains why the fallacy survives its exposure. The critics say that no political programme can be derived from the Marxian prediction of the inevitable destruction of Capitalism at the hands of the proletariat. For it is senseless to enlist fighters for a battle which is said to be already decided; while if the battle is not yet decided, you cannot predict its issue.\* But

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\* This is about how Mr. Ayer has recently put the matter (ENCOUNTER, Vol. 5, No. 4). A year before that Mr. Plamenatz had summed up his analysis epigrammatically in *German Marxism and Russian Communism* (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1954) as follows: "... whatever the relation of science and social-

within a dynamo-objective coupling, the logical objection against using a historic prediction as an appeal to fight for the certain outcome of history no longer arises. For the prediction is accepted only because we believe that the Socialist cause is just; and this implies that Socialist action is right. The prediction implies a call to action.

But there is more to be added here. If our sense of bad faith merely caused us to disguise our thirst for righteousness in the erudite terms of a specious sociology, the masquerade would perhaps be merely pitiful. Unfortunately, moral passions undergo a fateful change when decked out as scientific statements. I have hinted at this change already when saying that any moral objection against Marxist action can be brushed aside by pointing to its "scientific" correctness. We can see what has happened here: when transposed into equivalent scientific affirmations, the moral motive of Socialism was torn from its original moral context. It became an isolated passion, inaccessible to moral considerations. This is fanaticism, a fanaticism fixed upon the materialistic equivalents of the original moral passion, that is upon "the interests of the working class" or, more correctly, upon the coercive powers of those who are held to represent the interests of the working class. It is a fanatical cult of power; moral man's flight into captivity.

### *The Moral Appeal of Immorality*

THIS explains not only the deliberate unscrupulousness of modern totalitarianism,

ism as parts of the life of one man, what he can never be is a scientific socialist. Not even if his science predicts what his socialism approves. 'Scientific socialism' is a logical absurdity, a myth, a revolutionary slogan, the happy inspiration of two moralists who wanted to be unlike all moralists before them." In a recent book, *The Illusion of an Epoch* (Cohen and West, London, 1955), Professor H. B. Acton has re-examined the whole question once more in great detail, only to conclude: "The Marxist can derive moral precepts from his social science only to the extent that they already form, because of the vocabulary used, a concealed and unacknowledged part of it."

but also the moral appeal of its declared resolve to act unscrupulously. For this resolve is taken to show that its power embodies righteousness, and therefore may acknowledge no higher obligation than to achieve and defend its own supremacy, which it must do at all costs. Those who rule in its name are believed to scorn mercy and honesty, not simply for reasons of expediency (as Machiavelli would already have allowed them to do), but on account of their moral superiority over the emotionalism, hypocrisy, and general woolliness of their moralising opponents. Therefore, sceptics who deny with contempt the reality of all moral motivations will rally fanatically to the moral support of such naked power.

Once accepted, Marxism eliminates also the eternal discrepancy between the universalist claims of morality and its actual dependence on power and material circumstances. Marxism does so by denying its claims *qua* morality, while offering it immanent forms of operation within a specified political movement. Universality is to be achieved by this inherently righteous movement through its inevitable conquest of the world.

We see then that Marxism is falsely accused of materialism: its materialism is a disguise for its moral purpose. It is true that by their materialistic disguise these aspirations are torn out of their moral context, and are harnessed to the service of material aggrandisement and political violence. But this does not subvert the underlying Socialist dynamics. The fervour of social enterprise has remained the emotional justification of Communist governments. Hence their persistent efforts to fill all economic activities with high moral significance; hence their gigantomania, their neglect of the most desperate popular needs—e.g. for better housing—in favour of ornate skyscrapers and underground marble halls; hence their whole curious economic system, which revels in production and shies away from consumption. We in the West watch hopefully for every sign of true materialism in Soviet Russia. For if the régime once really consented to pursue material advantages, it would have lost its fanaticism. Love of

comfort may be ignoble, but one may trust it to be accommodating.

The moral appeal of immorality has been effective also in other mass movements of our time. Meinecke had detected an early form of it in Pan-Germanism, and Hitler's rise has confirmed this analysis in a diabolically literal way. Hitler greatly profited from the Bolshevik example, but his movement was rooted primarily in German Romantic nihilism. This doctrine taught that an outstanding individual is a law unto himself and may, as a statesman, unscrupulously impose his will on the rest of the world—and that a nation has likewise the right and the duty to fulfil its "historic destiny" irrespective of moral obligations. Such teachings contradict the universal claims of morality, just as the Marxist-mechanistic image of man does; they identify morality with the self-fulfilment of the individual or the nation. This can unite to a fierce patriotism all the inordinate social hopes of our age; and could eventually embody both in the aim of a German world government under Hitler.

The immanence of great moral passions in Hitler's programme explains the strong moral appeal which it made by its very unscrupulousness—for example, to many members of the German Youth Movement. Whenever fanaticism combines with cynicism we must suspect a dynamo-objective coupling, and its presence is confirmed if we find that cynicism is making a moral appeal. Hitler's frenzy was primarily evil, but its appeal to the German youth was moral: they accepted evil actions as a moral duty. Their response was determined by the same convictions which Marx had held about the nature of moral motives in public life. They believed that such motives were mere rationalisations of power, and that power alone was real. Hence their disgust of moralising, and their moral passion for unscrupulous violence.

In a tentative study published some years ago, I called this principle a "moral inversion." Such inversion can, of course, never be completely realised. No régime, however fanatical, can act without accepting some overt moral restraints. I have referred to this

already in describing the way naked power is bound to limit itself by the exercise of persuasion. But the principles of moral inversion are not denied by the mere fact that occasional concessions are made to overt morality.

### *Mask into Minotaur*

WE MUST guard also against assuming that a materialistic interpretation of moral motives must always result in moral inversion. Far from it. Men may go on talking the language of positivism, pragmatism, and naturalism for many years, and yet continue to respect the principles of truth and morality which their vocabulary anxiously ignores.

Take for example the text of Freud, in *Civilisation and its Discontents*, in which he interprets culture in the light of his psychology. At one point he writes emphatically: "This alone I know with certainty, namely that man's value judgments are guided absolutely by their desire for happiness, and are therefore merely an attempt to bolster up their illusions by arguments." But at the opening of the same essay he had expressed his deep respect for Romain Rolland for spurning the false standards commonly applied by men who seek power, success, and wealth and who admire these achievements in others, while they fail to appreciate the true values of life; and again at another point he had declared himself for the ideal of a generous society in which "all work together for the happiness of all."

We can see the dynamo-objective coupling operating here on the same lines as in Marx. A utilitarian interpretation of morality is used as an accusation of bad faith, while the moral indignation which the writer thus expresses is safely disguised as a scientific statement. And on other occasions, these concealed moral passions reappear, sanctioning ethical ideals disguised in utilitarian terms.

This prevarication of the critical mind in its encounter with morality can be traced back to antiquity. Thucydides records how the Athenians at one moment affirm that there is only one law of god and man, and

that is “to rule wherever one can”; how they sneer at the hypocrisy of the Spartans who likewise pursue their self-interest but cloak it with the mantle of justice and honour—while at the next moment they draw a sharp contrast between the path of self-interest which leads to safety, and the path of justice and honour which involves danger. Pitifully groping for tangible terms, the great Athenian’s love of Athens’ greatness falls back (in the Funeral Oration) on vaunting the unrivalled size of its enterprises.

Since the 18th century we have again seen many hardened utilitarians nobly upholding their logically unaccountable moral convictions—but only in the 20th century has popular thought been permeated by this internal contradiction. Today our moral judgments are quite generally without theoretical protection. They may disguise themselves as a sociology of “aggressiveness” or “competitiveness” or of “social stability,” etc. and may advocate in these terms more kindness, generosity, tolerance, and brotherhood among men. The public, taught by the sociologist to distrust its traditional morality, is grateful to receive it back from him in a scientifically-branded wrapping. Indeed, a writer who has proved his hard-headed perspicacity by denying the existence of morality will always be listened to with especial respect when he does moralise in spite of this. Thus the scientific disguise of our moral aspirations may not only protect their substance against destruction by nihilism, but even allow them to operate effectively by stealth. This is how great reformers like Bentham or Dewey have been able to use their utilitarianism for moral purposes.

But it is dangerous to rely on it that men will continue indefinitely to pursue their moral ideals within a system of thought which denies reality to them. Not because they might lose their ideals—which is rare, and usually without serious public consequences—but because they might slip into the logically stabler state of complete moral inversion.

To recognise the existence of moral inversion is to acknowledge moral forces as primary motives of man, and to deny that

“sublimation” underlies (as Freud thought) the creation of culture. Of course, moral forces are elicited and shaped by education, even as man’s intelligence or artistic talent is evoked by education. But this does not imply that morality is a mere rationalisation of self-interest, any more than science is a “sublimation” of sexual curiosity. On the contrary, the Freudian interpretation of morality is itself but a spurious form of moral inversion. It forms part of that expurgation of modern language that substitutes neutral—and preferably sexual—terms for candidly moral ones, to avoid acknowledging man’s nobler faculties and higher obligations. But this masquerade can go on only so long as the moral convictions, whose internal instability it bolsters up, remain comparatively peaceable. A great upsurge of moral demands on social life, such as arose at the end of the 18th century and has since flooded the whole world, must seek a more forcible expression. When injected into a utilitarian framework it transmutes both itself and this framework. It turns into the fanatical force of a machinery of violence. This is how moral inversion is completed: man masked as a beast turns into a Minotaur.

### *The Temptation of the Intellectuals*

THE moral appeal of a declared contempt for moral scruples is explained in terms of a moral inversion. An extension of this explanation will resolve yet another paradox: the fact that Stalin’s régime was acclaimed by eminent Western writers and painters whose very works were condemned and suppressed by that régime. And indeed—as Czeslaw Milosz has shown in *The Captive Mind*—its appeal was actually due in part to its proclaimed disgust with modern art and literature, and to its determination to make all cultural pursuits subservient to the state. Milosz records from his own experience in Poland that these sentiments and policies formed part of the temptation offered by Marxism to the Polish intellectuals.

To understand this we must consider, first, that unmasking and impregnating—the negative and positive operations of Marxism—can be applied to every form of thought in the

transition from Capitalism to Socialism. Just as the bourgeois ideals of freedom and democracy are unmasked, while a party-dictatorship is endowed instead with the quality of being intrinsically free and democratic, so also bourgeois art and literature are unmasked, and the sycophantic glorification of Socialism is endowed instead with the values of art and literature. All cultural life is subjected to a similar transformation which surrenders it totally to the interest of the Socialist state at the discretion of its absolute rulers. This is totalitarianism: the question is why it appeals, or has appealed, to a notable number of intellectuals in free countries pursuing vocations which totalitarianism discredits and suppresses.

A first clue to this enigma is found in the word "unmasking." Socialism was not alone in rebelling against bourgeois domination in the 19th century, nor was scientism the only weapon for attacking bourgeois ideals. Allied to these was a general alienation of the intellectuals. The joint effects of the romantic and scientific movements engendered a modern cultural nihilism which repudiated the existing society as comprehensively as Marxism did. This happened when the excessive moral aspirations of modern man were disappointed by the normal complacency, selfishness, and hypocrisy of man, and these shortcomings were accounted for by interpreting morality as something which people obey only if they cannot evade it. Once more—as in Marxism—moral nihilism is the mark here of exceptionally strong moral passions, as Turgenev portrayed it in the student Bazarov, the literary archetype of philosophic nihilism.

Though philosophic nihilists were radical individualists, they naturally tended to sympathise with revolutionary movements aiming at the total destruction of society. Even so, the fact that many of them would go so far as to give their fervent support to totalitarian governments grimly hostile to their own vocation as intellectuals, still remains to be explained. It can be understood only in its historical setting.

We must acknowledge that personal

nihilism has served for a century as an inspiration to literature and philosophy, both by itself and by provoking a reaction to itself. The loathing of bourgeois society, immoralism and despair, have been prevailing themes of great fiction, poetry, and philosophy on the continent of Europe since the middle of the 19th century. Anti-philistinism, which bred the modern bohemian, has also stimulated in him a rebellious originality which has renewed the fine arts by a profusion of masterpieces unsurpassed in any previous period of history.

But these triumphs left their authors mortified by self-doubt. Their hatred of prevailing ideologies had spread (as in Marxism) into an attack on the very status of man and human thought. Peer Gynt at the end of his pilgrimage of pretences recognises himself in the metaphor of an onion: leaf after leaf of self-dramatisation is peeled off, leaving nothing at the core. The bourgeois encyclopædists Bouvard and Pécuchet lose themselves in a labyrinth of inanities. Musil's "Man Without Properties" has ceased to be, for he thinks about life instead of living it. The futile regress of "thoughts, thoughts about thoughts, thoughts about thoughts about thoughts," exhausts Sartre's Mathieu in *L'Âge de Raison*; yet a totally unreflecting man like the "Stranger" of Camus is equally cut off from reality, imprisoned in his private world.

We can then no longer say anything in good faith and all rational action becomes a lifeless banality; violence alone is still honest, but only gratuitous violence is authentic action. Having arrived at this stage, the modern intellectual will include himself in his nauseated contempt for the moral and cultural futility of his time. Having rendered the universe utterly meaningless, he himself dissolves in a universal wasteland.

If the intellectual is now attacked from the flank by Marxist unmaskers, who will lump him together with the bourgeoisie, his position becomes precarious. His own growing consciousness of living in a spiritual desert tends to re-echo the Marxian analysis of his own art and science as mere superstructures of a contemptible Capitalism. Moreover, any

resistance to this attack would tend to prove its justice by forcing him into partnership with the bourgeoisie, and it would also threaten to deprive him of that anti-bourgeois status on which his self-respect is founded. This dilemma suffices by itself to account for the surrender of men like Sartre, Picasso, and Bernal, to a philosophy which denies the very existence of their intellectual pursuits; the more so, since—under the protection of their own bourgeois governments—they can happily continue to cultivate these for the time being.

But we reach the turning point here. The philosophic nihilist's hidden moral passions are always available for political action if this can be based on nihilist assumptions. He can safely indulge his moral passions by accepting the intrinsic righteousness of an unscrupulous revolutionary power. Injected into the engines of violence, his humane aspirations can at last expand without danger of self-doubt and his whole person responds joyfully to a civic home of such acid-proof quality. Admittedly, the artist or scientist will still find it difficult to accept the dreary cultural aims of a Communist dictatorship as the true fulfilment of his vocation. Yet he may try to overcome his revulsion for reasons that are not altogether base. For he is relieved thereby from belonging to the dying culture of a rotten society or from not belonging to any society. He may feel that a subservient rôle in a Communist society can be only temporary. For ultimately, the triumph of Historic Necessity must fulfil the needs of the mind as those of the body; and after all, even in the meantime often no more is demanded of him than an occasional lip-service to the official cultural policy.

### *Partisan Science*

SINCE the rise of Greek philosophy in the 5th century B.C. men have been considering the possibility of systematically doubting what they believed in. Marxism is a relatively stable structure in which moral aspirations can be saved from self-doubt at the price of fixing them to the pursuit of a certain set of material ends. But a similar

fixation seems to operate less successfully for artistic passions. While the people of the Soviet Union under Stalin did not lack a sense of moral purpose, they were bored with the official artistic products. And the attempt to identify the search for truth with the advancement of Soviet Communism has met with even greater difficulties. This had many reasons.

In spite of Hume's scepticism and its antecedents, going back to ancient Pyrrhonism, there was no self-doubt among scientists in the modern free societies of the 20th century. On the contrary, belief in science stood supreme as the only belief that remained practically unchallenged. Indeed, according to the positivist view widely disseminated since Comte, all human thought was seen engaged in a humble pilgrimage towards scientific perfection, and to Marx and Engels natural science was the archetype of objective truth: to them science was definitely *not* an ideology to be unmasked now, and to be later identified with the victory of Socialism. But once the fundamental dynamo-objective coupling is firmly established for moral passions, it inevitably tends to become extended to science on the same lines as to artistic pursuits. The neo-Marxian theory of science first rose to importance around 1930 and became within the subsequent decade the official doctrine of the U.S.S.R. under Stalin. At first it was limited to reinterpreting the history of science to show that each step in its progress occurred in response to practical needs. To claim independent status for pure science was ridiculed as mere snobbery. From the unmasking of science as being really technology, there followed the glorification of technology as being really science. Since technology achieves material welfare, it was accepted as part of progress and of Socialism itself; so the pursuit of science became at last embodied in the advancement of Socialism.

So far this was harmless nonsense. But soon, unmasking became more virulent. It began with scattered sniping at the more modern developments of "bourgeois science," e.g. in relativity, quantum mechanics, astronomy, psychology, and it culminated in the

campaign against Mendelism. The new position was finally established when in August 1948 Lysenko triumphantly announced to the Academy of Science that his biological views had been approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and members rose as one man to acclaim him.

The universality of science was now definitely repudiated. The claims of bourgeois science to universal validity were unmasked as deceptive ideology, while the validity of Soviet Science was to be based frankly on its partisan or class character. Owing to the dual mechanism of Marxism, the doctrine that all science is class science served simultaneously both to discredit bourgeois science and to accredit Socialist science. Moreover, in serving the Party, science recovers—in a new sense—a claim to universality: the universality of truth is replaced by the inherently righteous and therefore historically inevitable victory of a future Communist world-government.

The dual meanings of “objectivity” and “partisanship” in this method of accrediting Soviet science are self-consistent. The claims of bourgeois science to objectivity and universal validity are unmasked as false pretences on the grounds that no affirmation of science, history, or philosophy can be objective and that in reality they are always partisan weapons. At the same time, Marxism claims to have made politics into a science that bases every political action on a strictly objective assessment of the social conditions in which it has to operate. The unmasking of bourgeois objectivity as partisan is itself an example of this Marxist objectivity. But such objectivity does not claim universality, for it would contradict itself if it claimed—for example—that the bourgeoisie could be persuaded to accept it as such. Marxism must claim for itself to be objective in the sense only of being a weapon of proletarian partisanship. Remember that neither “objectivity” nor “partisanship” is either right or wrong, it is only Socialism that is right (i.e. rising) and Capitalism that is wrong (i.e. decaying). The demand made by Stalin’s régime on Soviet scholars to eschew objectivity (in the

sense of universal validity) and to be guided instead by Socialist partisanship is therefore quite consistent with the Marxists’ own claim to objectivity.\*

### *The Abolition of Fact*

THE process of moral inversion inevitably undermines the very conception of facts—of ordinary matters of fact. After all, the overwhelming part of our factual beliefs are held at second hand through trusting others; and in the great majority of cases our trust is placed in the authority of certain persons, either by virtue of their public office or as our chosen intellectual leaders. The establishment of public facts outside science is entrusted, in free societies, to newspapers, parliaments, and law courts. Their fact-finding is continuous with that of sociologists, historians, and scientists, and is granted strong presumptive credit also by the whole of society, even though there are always dubious cases in which rival affirmation will compete for public acceptance. As in science, this system of shared beliefs relies on a chain of overlapping areas within each of which a few authoritative persons can keep watch over each other’s integrity and the sense of what is important. A society possessing such a network of mutual confidence may be said to maintain a certain standard of “factuality,” to use Hannah Arendt’s expression.†

This widely extended network of mutual

\*To be sure, such “guidance” may remain abortive: the intellectual passions of scientists may rebel successfully, and reduce the effects of totalitarianism over scientific thought to a verbal disguise of its proper standards. In fact, so far—even in biology—a brief incantation of Marxist phrases has usually sufficed to secure immunity from Marxist doctrine for the substance of a Soviet scientific paper.

†We know of course that even people whose conceptions of the nature of things otherwise coincide, may be fundamentally divided in respect to the reality of certain facts. Antagonists on either sides of a great scientific controversy do not accept the same facts as real and significant. A society believing in magic, witchcraft, and oracles will agree on a whole system of facts which modern men regard as fictitious. Similar logical gaps could be found between standards of factuality prevailing in different periods of

trust, on which the factual consensus of a free society depends, is fragile. Any conflict which sharply divides people will tend to destroy this mutual trust and make universal agreement on facts bearing on the conflict difficult to achieve. In France the Third Republic was shaken to its foundations by a question of fact: the question whether Captain Dreyfus had written the "*bordereau*." In Britain the dispute over the genuineness of the "Zinoviev Letter," as in the U.S. the trial of Alger Hiss, aroused popular conflicts which made it impossible to agree universally on the facts of these matters.

Such temporary and partial failures of factuality may of course be excused as passing excesses of political passion. But under totalitarianism we can see factuality reduced to the extent of allowing the state to fashion public facts almost at will, as it suits its own interests. These powers to spread falsehoods are due to some extent simply to the government's monopoly of public utterances, backed by terror; but such coercive powers do not account for the currency gained by these falsehoods abroad, and any willing acceptance of these facts is evidence of a persuasiveness of their own, which must be assumed to be decisive also in gaining currency for them within the territories under coercion. This indicates a corruption of the very principles of factual evidence, involving a wholesale shift of the usual presumptions which underlie the process of fact-finding. It is only when our sense of reality has already been gravely impaired by such a shift, that we become receptive to downright clumsy falsifications.

A modern revolutionary government aiming at the total renewal of society inevitably sets off this change by severing all ties with its opponents. Whoever is not its unconditional supporter is held to be its mortal enemy. The dictatorship thus creates a situation in which any dissenter must in fact become its mortal enemy, and this justifies unlimited suspicion. When all open dissent is eliminated, disaffection can manifest itself

European history. But I will keep here to the effects of contemporary political dynamics on the accrediting of matters of fact.

only in trifles, and hence the secret police must be allowed to construe trifles as potential conspiratorial acts. The presuppositions of such investigations become analogous to those governing the Freudian analysis of a neurotic. On the assumption of an Oedipus complex, the patient's every word and action, whether uttered or unspoken, done or undone (and even events in which he became involved by accident), can be interpreted as expressing his hidden hostility to his father. Similarly, once you assume that any trifles may be interpreted as a sign of disaffection which, in its turn, may be construed into an act of high treason, the methods of fact-finding practised in Stalin's prisons will appear to have been altogether appropriate to the purpose. Even the exercise of physical pressure bordering on torture will become inevitable, for the same reasons which made torture indispensable to the Inquisition. For accusations concerning a man's hidden intentions cannot be regarded as firmly established unless the accused eventually admits them. And every confession which is extorted confronts those still resisting with an increased persuasive pressure and extends the fictitious universe of public facts established under conditions of terror.

This process of fashioning public facts in the interests of the state will naturally receive support from a scholarship conceived as a political weapon. Historians will supplement accusations of recent subversive activities by suitably reinterpreting the part played by the accused at earlier times of history. Stories which otherwise might seem fantastic will be rendered plausible in view of the ruling party's conspiratorial experience. There is nothing absurd in accusing a veteran Communist of having always been in the pay of the police, since a Malinovsky, for many years Lenin's most trusted fellow conspirator and leader of the Bolshevik faction in the Duma, could turn out later to have been a police spy during all this time.\*

In every modern country, national prejudice tends to obfuscate the establishment of

\* See Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution* (Thames and Hudson, 1956).

public facts of political interest. In a free society this tendency is counteracted by the rivalry of opinions, which will maintain a universe of public facts so long as people can mutually trust each other to observe a proper level of factuality in drawing their conclusions from contradictory arguments. The élite of a modern revolutionary party is trained, on the contrary, to exercise its political bias to the utmost. "Its members' whole education," writes Hannah Arendt, "is aimed at abolishing their capacity for distinguishing between truth and fiction. Their superiority consists in the ability immediately to dissolve every statement of fact into a declaration of purpose."\* Such dynamism, backed up by terror, would suffice by itself to loosen the roots in reality of all officially alleged facts, and to separate revolutionary opinion by a logical gap from that of their opponents. Yet this propaganda would remain comparatively ineffectual, but for the parallel effects of terror and secrecy, in creating situations which lend colour to every conceivable suspicion. This is where facts relevant to politics cease to exist, in the sense that one can only choose between either accepting no facts or accepting some at one's pleasure on manifestly insufficient evidence.†

### *The Orthodoxy of Freedom*

NO REGIME has carried out the implications of modern totalitarian dynamism to its logical limits. In fact, it may seem quite impracticable even to approach the complete subordination of all thought to the service of one specific centre of power. The artificial universe encased in the official jargon had always to be supplemented by natural human sentiments expressed in normal language, and occasionally whole masses of them have been reintroduced. This happened in the 1930's when the Kremlin decided to restore national sentiments and their traditional heroes into Russian historic con-

sciousness, abandoning thereby the hitherto uncontested doctrine of M. N. Pokrovsky (1868-1932) who had turned historiography into an abstract sociological analysis on Marxist lines. On another occasion, when—in 1950—Stalin repudiated the absurd doctrine of N. Y. Marr (1864-1934) according to which all language was class-language, the dictator gave a vivid picture of how this orthodoxy had hitherto trampled on Soviet linguistics—freely drawing for this purpose on the vocabulary of liberalism and aptly using its principles for the condemnation of this case of totalitarian thought-control which he had himself imposed until that moment.\*

The gradual liberation of thought that has occurred since Stalin's death may be due to a leaking-out of the generous passions buried alive under their Marxist armoury of violence. Indeed, by a kind of inverted Freudian abreaction, this captive zeal for righteousness may yet be gradually released from its pathological repressions and enter once more into the context of consciously declared moral aspirations.

Or perhaps we may witness at least the subsiding of the moral passions that are the motive power of totalitarian tyrannies. A new generation, less susceptible to great hates and hopes, may be attracted rather by the enjoyment of comfort. It may be pitiful that we should hope for self-indulgence to liberate us from fanaticism; but a sensualist can love his fellowmen, while a fanatic must hate them.

We may also hope for an intellectual

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\* I. V. Stalin, *Concerning Marxism in Linguistics*, Soviet News Booklet, London (1950), p. 22. "The slightest criticism of the state of affairs in Soviet linguistics" (he writes), "even the most timid attempt to criticise the so-called 'new doctrine' in linguistics was persecuted and suppressed by the leading linguistic circles. Valuable workers and researchers in linguistics were dismissed from their posts or demoted for being critical of N. Y. Marr's heritage or expressing the slightest disapproval of his teachings. Linguistic scholars were appointed to leading posts not on their merits, but because of their unqualified acceptance of N. Y. Marr's theories.

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\* Hannah Arendt, *The Burden of Our Time* (Secker and Warburg, 1951).

† George Orwell, in 1984, said already that belief in reality is a subversive principle under totalitarianism.

rebellion. The dreary inanity, the blatant mendacity of a régime endorsed by the supreme critical efforts of man, may evoke at last a revolt of man's critical faculties against their own logical outcome. Idealistic professions, once spurned as vague and dishonest, may come to men's lips again with a feeling of their rediscovered meaning. Liberty may be rediscovered among the ruins caused by its own self-destruction. And on this fundamental demand for liberty a whole universe of true beliefs may be re-erected.

But whatever we may achieve in the future, the revolutions of the 20th century will have revealed an instability of thought which no subsequent events can disprove.

We cannot even diagnose this instability without experiencing it in the very act of doing so. The recognition granted in a free society to the independent growth of science, art, and morality, involves a dedication of society to the fostering of a specific tradition of thought, transmitted and cultivated by a particular group of authoritative specialists, perpetuating themselves by co-option. To uphold the independence of thought implemented by such a society is to subscribe to a kind of orthodoxy which, though it specifies no fixed articles of faith, is virtually unassailable within the limits imposed on the process of innovation by the cultural leadership of a

free society. Moreover this orthodoxy, and the cultural authorities which we respect, are backed by the coercive power of the state and financed by the beneficiaries of property. The institutions by which their authority is exercised, the schools, universities, churches, academies, law courts, newspapers, and political parties, are under the control of the same policeman and soldiers who guard the wealth of the landowners and capitalists. Must this institutional framework be accepted as the civic home of a free society? Is it true that the absolute right of moral self-determination, on which political liberty was founded, can be upheld only by refraining from any radical action towards the establishment of justice and brotherhood? That indeed, unless we strictly agree that within our lifetime we must no more than loosen—but never cut through—the ties of existing iniquities, we shall inevitably precipitate men into abject servitude?

For my part, I would say: Yes. I believe that, on the whole, these limitations are imperative. Unjust privileges can be reduced only by cautiously graded stages; those who would demolish them overnight would erect far greater injustices in their place. An absolute moral renewal of society can be attempted only by an absolute power which must inevitably destroy the moral life of man.

Mary Cecil

## Through the Looking-glass

**I** FIRST went to Out-Patients at a mental hospital accompanied by a very voluble devil. How we ever reached there at all I don't know, because he would keep buzzing the wrong directions at me. But we found the place at last, and after walking three times round the building, an entrance grew up where there had not been one before.

Once inside there was a long wait during which we argued the best way to deal with the doctor. He turned out to be a dark sallow man with a quite extraordinary likeness to Satan himself.

"You'll be a fool," warned my companion, "if you tell this one anything. He's as bad as me. Worse, probably."

We were hurriedly passed on to another doctor. He was more fortunate with his face and I liked him at once. There was a cosiness all around him. My resident, who had been bullying me for days about this appointment and threatening death, destruction, and lunacy if I breathed so much as a word about him, suddenly went all sulky and muttered:

"Oh tell him what you like. He won't believe it anyway, so why should I care?"

So I did tell the warm doctor, though tactfully, and with reserve. "So there it is," I wound up miserably, "all day long, and sometimes all night too, he does nothing but put up placards wherever I look, saying I'm going mad."

I paused significantly.

"I don't think you're mad," the warm doctor said largely.

It was just what I wanted to hear. But I was distracted by the one-armed woman sitting beside the doctor. She craned over to see what he was writing down, and then gazed soberly at me. I tried smiling at her now and then, but she never smiled back. The warm doctor said:

"How about coming into hospital for a while, because I do think you have a nervous disorder."

What excellent wording! Now if he'd said *mental* disorder I would never have trusted him again. I was always trying to strike a bargain with my resident, in that he could drive me to a nervous breakdown but not a mental one. On his nice days he was quite sorry he had to do either, but if he didn't he'd look such a fool where he came from. They'd all laugh at him. On his fiendish days, he couldn't wait to do his worst.

Well I said I'd rather try and fight him myself for another week, and the warm doctor said all right, good luck. I tried one last smile at the one-armed lady but she was staring through me as though I were a window looking into a specially untidy room. I did so want to do my own exorcising, you see, for the pest was for ever sneering at my hopeless way of waging life. I was a wash-out, he said.

For the best part of a week I fought a grim battle. There is no way of stopping your ears

to this sort of persecution. But I struggled through the shopping every morning with threats and warnings battering my eardrums and posters shooting up all over the place. Then, just as I was toiling home exhausted but triumphant, up would flash a notice:

"Yah! You've forgotten the bread!"

And a hoot of malicious laughter zigzagged through the ether. The humiliation of it. In fact, before the week was up I knew I was beaten. And the minute my efforts slackened, the onslaught became something demonic. He went through his whole repertoire of nagging, wheedling, flattering, abusing—the air was stiff with it all. The craftiness of that whispered advice! Do this or that foolish action and you'll be rid of me, and when you eagerly obeyed—the paroxysms of mirth! What an ass one felt! "But why do you listen to me?" the blighter had the nerve to ask each time. As if one had any choice.

I FORCED myself to a rumba-band rehearsal, though I'd only done symphonic work before. But the noise of it was overpowering and I had to sight-read music through an incessant spraying of capital letters. Blowing doggedly down my flute I cancelled out each notice as it arrived, so that this sort of quick-fire argument went on:

"I'll get you yet!"

"Pah! You don't exist."

"We'll see about that!"

"A mere figment of the imagination."

"Yes? You poor fool, lunatics always think they're hugely sane. You're falling into another of my traps."

He had me there. I began to wish I'd stuck to thinking myself mad.

Late one night he really had me terrified. I forget whether I was to drop dead in five minutes or start raving in ten minutes, but anyway I decided to rush us to hospital. I rang up my doctor, and then we put on a carefully thought-out act to make sure of our chit. You see, the kind of upbringing I had makes for such a ladylike little breakdown, and I was aware of the difficulties of diagnosis to a G.P. But we did very well, and as the warm doctor's place was full up, we went

to an observation ward in a general hospital. On the way, I was fairly crowing over my strangely subdued companion and even dared to call him a spook, which as you know, is the worst insult. I was sure he'd have to behave himself in the hospital.

But when we arrived and were guided in with a hand on our elbow, nails cut, examined from head to toe, an awful uneasiness happened. This was his cue, of course.

"Fooled you again!" he yelled, "now you *have* done it! They'll certify you here."

The garrulous swine kept me awake for the rest of the night in the moaning, tossing ward. In the small hours, a really violent case was dragged down to the end bed, shrieking and cackling just like they do in the radio plays.

"Radio plays my cloven hoof," snorted my resident, "that's how you'll end up."

The thought of such exhibitionism was agonising, and I couldn't look at the new patient, who was calling the nurses the most extraordinary names.

In the morning we saw the ward doctor. He was a fatherly man with a Cheshire-cat grin. He seemed to think us a very large joke and it was impossible to judge when he was serious. I told him how mad I was.

"You'll find yourself in a mental hospital," he beamed.

"No, no," I corrected, "nervous cases only. Think of the disgrace. They've enough to live down with Aunt Doris."

His grin widened by another two inches.

"If you won't go in voluntarily you'll have to be certified."

"All right, all right," I said quickly, in case it wasn't a joke.

"So you're a musician," he said, and his face nearly split in half. "I like Bach too, so I must be as mad as you, mustn't I?"

I stretched my mouth a small way. Was this a joke, or wasn't it? The problem occupied my resident and me for the rest of the day.

THE following afternoon we all went before the Board. Devils are surprisingly ignorant on some points though they kid you

they know everything, so I had to ask the worried old lady beside me in the queue, what was this Board? She said she had a kipper wedged in her spine. I said I was awfully sorry and asked the dreamy girl farther along.

"They decide what to do with us," she explained. "There's a psychiatrist, and the ward doctor, and of course, a magistrate."

There was a mumbled chorus of: "Yers, there must be a magistrate."

I pointed out that three doctors were needed to certify us, but she assured me cheerfully that they seemed to manage. I was sick with fear when my turn came. The psychiatrist was the cold kind. He said bitingly:

"You've made a pretty good fool of yourself, haven't you?"

"Yes, haven't I."

"Been behaving very oddly indeed, haven't you?" he thundered contemptuously in exactly the jargon of my resident who was now joining in, so that made two of them at it.

"Very," I agreed again and again.

"Your parents will fetch you tomorrow, and you'd better behave yourself in future. Try to think a little of their feelings. Next case."

Even the Cheshire cat was cowed and I walked to the door in a daze. They were throwing me out. They didn't think I was ill. What was I to do? My resident, who should have been gloating, inexplicably went all worried too and suggested asking about going back to the warm doctor. I did, but nobody answered, though the ward doctor glanced cautiously sideways and then ventured the ghost of a grin.

All that night I watched with envy other people proving their lunacy by sudden signs of the cross or by lying naked on the floor or by loud talking to their spirits (in my advanced state of clairaudience I could make myself hear entirely by thought). But the more I considered these proofs, the shyer I felt. I did try some noisy weeping which was agony to do, but it wasn't nearly spectacular enough and nobody noticed.

It was a strain living at home. I was so

sorry for my parents—my mother's anxiety, my father's embarrassment (he's shy too). I had to pretend to be normal without stopping, and those days when my devil put me under a vow of silence I stayed in bed so that it wasn't so noticeable. After a fortnight like this I asked my mother as casually as possible to ring up the warm doctor, and off we went to a hospital where he visited. My mother said, not a word about Aunt Doris.

## II

AFTER a fortnight in a sort of reception ward in the mental hospital I complained to the doctor that nothing was being done. They didn't appear to appreciate the urgency of the position. There was I, helpless in the hands of a fiend from Hell and anything might happen any minute. The hospital ambled through its days, sweeping us off to Occupational Therapy or out to grass, as the mood took it. One might be suddenly singled out and, eager with hope, be subjected to a blood test or some flippancy like that.

"Ah, but we're doing a great deal for you," the doctor said earnestly, and for a second I almost believed him, only to brush aside such puerile psychology. I wasn't that far gone.

"In fact," the doctor continued fatly, "we're going to give you some injections. You'll be moved to another ward."

I'd learned already it was a waste of time asking questions. Psychiatrists thrive on their air of mystery. Anyway, the fact of strange surroundings was enough. In this ward there had been some outbursts from explosive patients. "It's only your upbringing makes you so appalled," my resident would say on his kind days, but it hardly helped. I noticed that the more obstreperous patients were dragged off, protesting violently, to some outer dungeon spoken of in whispers as The Villa. I added that to my fears and redoubled my efforts to appear totally harmless.

The girl in the next bed said the ward I was bound for was a mixed one. Now I'd accepted a number of odd things in this place—after all we all have our little ways—but men and women sharing a ward seemed just

a shade bohemian. On consulting my resident he said there were cubicles, or possibly a curtain slung down the centre, and added in his usual bad taste that it would be just up my street. Had he been anything of a devil at all, he would have known it was my dressing-gown I was worried about, an old moth-eaten relic from my brother's schooldays, much too short and—well, hardly becoming.

When I went up to this ward of doubtful repute it was afternoon and all but two of the occupants were away in the Occupation room. I advanced nervously into the common-room, placed between two dormitories, and took stock of the two women there. One was a very young girl, crouching in a chair. The strangeness of her expression chilled my blood so I went across to the other who was weeping on to a radiator. I offered her a cigarette but she said she'd prefer a glass of water. I hurried to the kitchen where I was pleased to find several nurses, both sexes, and the Sister, to witness my purposeful behaviour.

At four o'clock a stream of people roared in. Their numbers, and the fear of seeing insanity stamped across their faces like screams, snatched away the crumb of confidence the fetching of that glass of water had given me. After tea I saw a lady doctor who said I was to have some injections. I saw myself ablaze with vitamins in next to no time. At bedtime the men disappeared into one dormitory and we women into the other, so that was all right. A nurse prowled round the beds confiscating false teeth and spectacles and I was annoyed I hadn't either to offer. Across the way a patient was refusing point-blank to part with her reading-glasses. "Do you think I'm going to eat them?" she demanded acidly. More nurses were fetched, including two of the largest men ones, until there was a small crowd round her, speaking in soothing voices. But the specs stayed on her nose and her book open on her knees. She told the Night Sister and the Matron, who had joined in by then, that she'd been in hospital three months and always ignored the collection and nobody had ever noticed before. In the end she said if they must be so ridiculously

childish they could take the specs from her locker when she was asleep and not before. When the impressive party had marched off, she glared round the ward and snapped: "Do they think we're mad?" Then answered herself: "Well yes they do, of course."

Just as I was getting into bed I had noticed a sheet marked *The Villa*. There was a curious taste in my mouth. Had I been tricked into the place? Heart thudding, I gazed out of the window and saw a small building by itself. "That's *The Villa*," breathed the woman in the next bed.

THE clinking of teacups awoke me in the morning, then the rasping sound of the night nurse's light being pushed up to the ceiling; hurrying footsteps; a pile of blankets dumped on the central table, the soft slap of rubber sheets. The comfy sounds lapped my senses. The patients, who had for the most part been talkative and jocular the previous evening, were silent. My neighbour asked, was I on insulin? I said warily I didn't think so, though in this *Looking-glass* establishment one might be on anything without noticing.

"Treatment," the girl clarified.

"Is that the same as injections?"

"Yes," she nodded, "you'd better hop off and wash, then I'll show you how to make up an insulin bed."

Curiouser and curiouser. It seemed I'd landed in a diabetic ward. I followed the crowd and did what they did, asking no questions, to show how calm and rational I was. We stripped the sheets from our beds, replacing them with rubber sheets and blankets from the stock on the table. Somebody handed me an extraordinary nightgown, telling me to put my own in the locker. I pondered on this nightie. It seemed one had to make the difficult choice of exposing all one's back or all one's front. But then, one's days were entirely made up of such baffling problems. Even my resident would not be drawn into discussion. He was sulking, having failed to explain what these injections were about, though in his glib fashion he waved that away by saying it wasn't one of his helping days and what

did I think devils were for anyway? So I continued examining the material, tapes, and stitches on this joke nightie until I'd observed how the others coped and then did the same.

A nurse was bustling up and down with a small tray containing a couple of hyperdermics. She'd puncture two behinds and then dash off for more weapons. She left me till last. By then I was so keyed up that the second she stabbed me I burst into tears.

"We'll have you floating out of the ward in no time!" the nursed laughed gaily, speeding away towards the door. I saw myself sailing horizontally after her and thought, really they do tell one the most peculiar things here.

The blinds were drawn and screens put round each bed. The lights were turned off. Surely we weren't expected to sleep when we'd hardly woken up. But it was vital to do the correct thing so I closed my eyes resolutely. Frenzied little pictures danced before them. The harder I tried to sleep the more vivid the tortured faces swaying up to my face, and the more my resident said ear-splittingly that he was going to keep me awake. After half-an-hour of this misery, there was a sudden hoarse cry from another bed. I strained to hear above my bumping heart and *his* shouting. It happened again. In the next bed arose a series of groans. Across the ward, a shrill noise like a train whistle. I lay rigidly for what seemed hours, the air filled with weird cries which I saw rending the darkness in fantastic shapes. Mattresses creaked with the writhing victims of . . . what?

Through a gap in the screens I could see the lady doctor sitting at the table reading a newspaper. A nurse went round taking pulses. Did they expect a few fatalities every day? I glimpsed a trolley laden with bowls, jugs, rubber tubes, syringes, swabs, glittering objects, malevolent instruments. Later on it was wheeled to each bedside in turn and then the patients redoubled their struggles and moans. Pulling myself to the top of the pillow I caught a flash of a tousled head. The mouth was slobbering. "What did I tell you?" hooted my resident, "that's how you'll end up!"

I lay in a cold sweat. The tumult subsided gradually. The blinds were swung up, screens trundled away, bedtables pushed across with bowls of cereal on them. Looking wincingly round the ward I saw each flushed or chalky face stamped with a sort of nullity. The lady doctor came and spoke to me. She made a joke about it sounding like the zoo.

"In a few days you'll go off to sleep too," she smiled. "I believe it's quite pleasant."

**D**URING the next days I picked up as much information as possible, though I was shy of conversation because of interruptions from my resident. I gathered we were given a little more insulin every morning until we were thrown into a coma. This terrible word was spoken of in the same way as *The Villa*. One had to have a minimum of thirty comas, and all day long patients told each other how many they had to go. One was brought round by a solution of glucose poured through a nasal tube, and had to eat enormous amounts of starch and sugar for the rest of the day. As you might expect, the body does not always take kindly to this messing about, and one feels slightly ill at the best of times. Wherever we went we were accompanied by large jugs of glucose solution, in case we folded up. Then some patients had in the middle of the night what were called Reactions. They passed into a coma from sleep and it was a frantic job getting them out. These nocturnal dramas were very eerie. Night nurses had to patrol every hour, flashing torches in one's face and sometimes waking one with the mystifying words: "Put your tongue out."

Every morning I grew slightly hotter, thirstier, and more uncomfortable during treatment. I would experience sudden palpitations. And then it happened. My mind started breaking up, crumbling like a stale cake. Thus was insanity. I clung to each nurse who came to take my pulse, but couldn't speak. All control went, with such callous stealth, one fought every inch. Then, nothing.

The coming round was equally prolonged. I believe it took about half-an-hour. One

seemed to be struggling for one's life. Again and again some monstrous power pushed one under just as one clawed feebly at the speck of light. Gigantic nightmares attacked one like savage beasts. For endless minutes one was hurtled round at breakneck speed on a glaring platform, the round-shaped exit flashing past, always just out of reach. Slowly, painfully, the whirling circle eased to a gentle rocking motion and turned into the light shade above my bed. I lay trying to focus it. There was no sensation in my body, no power of movement. I felt alive within my own corpse. After a while my eyes blinked. I blinked and blinked, to reassure myself. Nurses revolved in slow motion past my screen, noises were magnified to thunderous proportions.

Suddenly a finger moved. Then a whole foot. But I couldn't speak. I tried to address a nurse who looked in, and to my horror heard only unintelligible sounds. The bed-table was pushed across, and my nightgown handed to me. I changed into it with clumsy movements. It took a long time. I handled the spoon like a baby, it kept going the opposite way on the plate and then missing my mouth. I wept with shame.

**E**VERY morning as one soaks in a hot bath—the only privilege of insulin-ites—the grip of the monster slackens, one smiles and feels exalted with freedom. Then the shadow of the next coma falls over the mind, to possess it for the rest of the day. There is not so much room to be possessed by a devil as well, and I used to think therein lay the cure. Of course we did try to make a joke of insulin. We'd say there ought to be an additional treatment to shock us out of the shock of Shock. We told each other that insulin was a jolly sight worse in Nijinsky's day.

Insulin does not improve with use. One traverses the same pattern of grotesque emotions every time. The first coherent thought on return is how many that leaves to go, although one cannot believe it has to be gone through again. The idea is plain fantastic. The minute the injection goes home,

one thinks . . . nothing can stop it happening now. The sight of us submissively making up our beds, getting into them and waiting meekly, filled me with impotent rage and bitterness. The thing outraged all decency. It was a travesty of the human soul. The better in health one gets, the worse this sense of insult.

At first I thought it might be different for pukka lunatics, who wouldn't understand or feel. Yet there was one woman who passed her days in a fog you could almost see. The only time she showed any purpose was first thing in the morning. She'd dress at lightning speed. A nurse would persuade her back to bed again. The second her back was turned, Anna was out like a flash and dressed. One time when the entire ward was trying to penetrate the fog and explain the situation, Anna's face cleared for a second. "Treatment . . . ?" she repeated, "is that the awful part of the day?"

### III

**B**UT even in hospital, in front of so many strangers, a strict control over oneself had to be exercised, and the only time one could let up and be one's unreal self was when one saw the psychiatrist, which wasn't often. Apart from that relief, it was most unsatisfactory. They never said anything, you see. Absolutely no comment, not a flicker of surprise at the astonishing, unique, unbelievable things one told them. They might almost have heard it before. My resident added to the confusion, too. As soon as I'd informed the doctor of his impossible behaviour, he'd switch round and go all sweet and on the side of authority. The minute I'd reported that so they could alter their notes, back he'd change into his callous clothes. Hardly had I stated I saw things in black-and-white, he promptly laid on colour. For a few weeks one never knew where one was, and the war between reason and unreason heaved and hammered in one's head without respite.

In fact, I got no inkling of hope, no hint of a solution, until, in the ward which dealt out

shock treatment, I met a lady doctor, very kind and interested, not so detached as the men on the ground floor. One time when she was questioning me and I'd been having a specially foreboding session with my inhabitant, I burst into tears. She laid a hand on my knee and said:

"You *are* going to get better, you know."

Well! Why hadn't anyone told me this before? I'd been telling and telling them the awful fates in store for me, the impossibility of ever being so much as my old self again which was bad enough anyway, and they'd smiled, or not smiled, whichever kind they were. The lady doctor said:

"You must just be patient, that's all. You've had a bad nervous breakdown."

Another miracle tossed up my mind like a pancake and slapped it down the other side. I had been hanging on the edge of a precipice all those months and all the time I was over it. The worst had happened. It was so wonderful I left the little room in a swirl of heady triumph. Not only did I call him a spook, but I dismissed him as dead, which just infuriates them. The members of the next world think they're the only people alive.

The lady doctor was respected by everyone in the mental ward I was in—even by the Rebel, though she stressed it was only the woman's sense of humour that was so irresistible. I admired the Rebel who was as brave as I was timid, and we became friends. I never saw her without all her powers of concentration, she read books and poetry, discussed literature and art, and I was amazed when one day she joined me on shock treatment. Funnily enough, it was only after a few doses of that that she became strained and her mind wandered during conversation.

Halfway through my course of shock treatment the news fell like a bomb that the lady doctor was being replaced. Changes of any kind spread an uneasiness through the ward. Everyone became restless and grumbled more. Dark rumours about the successor were circulated and the Rebel knew she would despise him. He put his foot in it straight away. Until then, our weekly health benefit certificates said we had nervous disorders, and sud-

denly, overnight, we apparently all became "depressed." The Rebel was furious, and declared that it would take more than this hospital to depress her.

I liked the new doctor because he had a limp, and I was at the uncomfortable stage of being violently sorry for as many people as possible. Patients weren't enough, and I added doctors with limps and black or brown nurses just because they were being black or brown in a pale country. All the same, the daily horror of shock was only made bearable by the familiar faces on one's return. The new doctor was young and enthusiastic. He'd whirl to one's bedside the minute one could focus at all and fire an extraordinary question. He must have swallowed all our files in one eager gulp, for he got our symptoms hopelessly mixed and one would be accused at interviews of harbouring quite the wrong resident. This incensed the Rebel no end. Nobody was going to palm off oddities on to her and she gave as good as she got.

At this time, I was doing innumerable intelligence tests and reading what I could read out of curiously shaped ink-blots. Wishing to be an interesting person, as ever, I laboured to see extremely Freudian things in those blots. The mental arithmetic, timed with a stop-watch, was a nightmare, as I'd never been able to do sums in the head at the best of times. And then, don't forget, there were two of us working out the same problem and getting different answers. For the rest of the day we'd argue how many men and how many bricks. One never heard any more about these tests, and the Rebel was wont to refuse point-blank to do them. She always wanted to know why and what good was it going to do her, which must have been irritating questions.

The new doctor waxed very excited about ink-blots. In fact the extravagance of what I saw in them was only surpassed by the extravagance of his interpretations, some of which haunt me to this day. But he was so well-meaning, and I felt he had such a thin time of it from the Rebel, that I was always polite and agreed with anything he said. Then his face lit up and he was happy.

HE WAS about the only person I was still considerate to after a month of shock treatment. It tells on the temper—either that, or one becomes subject to fits of uncontrollable giggles. By that stage, I had made the final of my final farewell speeches to my resident, and none too soon, for he was developing a habit of cracking extremely comical jokes, and I had a horror of laughing out loud. He gradually receded to a whisper in the far corner of the room and it was too much of a strain trying to hear what he was advising. At the very end, all he'd condescend was: "There's nothing to say. It's all been said." Which was certainly true. After he'd gone, the emptiness of the air was quite peculiar, but so wonderful. I had never appreciated silence before.

So I had myself to myself again all day, and began to find my companions irritating. I saw the newcomers behaving exactly as I had done, phase by phase, and instead of sympathising I was furious to see how sloppy I'd been. The daily fear of shock treatment, which at first had been a dazed, flat sort of fear, became sharper and more accentuated each time. Just when it seemed impossible to face another dose, I caught a cold and was reprieved. There were only five doses to complete my thirty comas. Two days' freedom, and the thought of returning was torturous. The next day was one of judgment. We were all to pass before a committee. This was everyone's big chance, and we all busied ourselves working out what we would say. The Rebel had none of this gnawing and nibbling thinking to do. She said exactly what she thought. I decided to be very politic—hardly original of course. There was a shrewd, peaceable North Countryman who'd say behind his pipe: "Ah just tells 'em what they want to hear." Why, I thought, should psychiatrists be immune from psychology? All men succumb to flattery. So when my turn came, I was gay and witty, I made jokes against myself, denied all my notions, crossed my fingers as I dismissed my resident as imaginary (half expecting a bellow of wrath to arrive from nowhere), told the watchful quartet how clever they were, and exalted

shock treatment to the skies. Admittedly, I nearly could see the whole miasma from their angle. The lame doctor looked quite pink and proud when he informed me of the verdict later on. I was off shock. He then said enthusiastically, why not write all this business down and we'll go through it together. Now this was just what I longed to do. It is rather frightening, standing just outside one's private fantasy. The same evening, the lame doctor vanished, was replaced by someone else, and I never heard another word of his proposal.

OFF and on, the warm doctor from the other hospital had breezed in in his inimitable way and blown a cobweb or two out of each mind in a matter of minutes. At this juncture, he told those of us under his broad wing that he was giving up visiting this hospital, and he then handed us over to two new doctors. I was not surprised it took two to replace him, though I found later on in the convalescent ward the doctors always hunted in threes. One of my new doctors interviewed me then and there, and offered me a free pass-out. He'd certainly seemed rather bored with me, but anyway his offer rendered me speechless for a minute or two. I was still labouring under the illusion that a comprehensive sorting-out process was imminent, like one hears so much about. Surely, I thought, I'll be told the reasons for the breakdown and given some kind of armour before I'm turned out into the world again. The doctor's look of surprise when I asked to be kept on for a while, suggested I'd put over my health act a little too well. So I hastily asked him my stock questions and received completely contradictory replies to those of the lame doctor which in their turn had conflicted with those of the lady doctor. This was quite in order and I planted these contradictions with the others already flowering in the herbaceous border of my mind. Something might come up, you never knew.

Next day I was promoted to a convalescent ward. The Rebel was most sorry for me. You'll hate it, she said, the noise is something deafening and they're all in love with their

doctors. Our energy was drained off daily, so we were a quiet and sober-minded ward, except for the six outsiders whom we ignored with dignity. They were epileptics and were just too bouncy to be borne.

Until I joined the boisterous nitwits upstairs I never appreciated how intellectual was our Acute Ward, where all the Arts were represented and there was even a student of philosophy. It was babel in the convalescent ward. As the Rebel said later, "If these are mild cases, what is sanity coming to?"

My new doctor was as keen on painting as the lame doctor had been on blots. They all have their little manias. Every day I painted with great earnestness, believing some gigantic truth would emerge like magic from my daubings, but one after another they were gratefully pocketed and never mentioned again. One morning when the psychiatrists were touring the ward in their threes, my man stopped his group in front of me, whipped up my latest painting and said proudly: "I have a fascinating collection of these at home. You chaps must come and see them." That was the last time I lifted a paintbrush. The Rebel had convinced me at last and I gave in my notice the next day.

She was also right about the ward. The one topic of conversation was the doctors. They were discussed, lauded, and psychoanalysed all day long and far into the night. Their every neurosis was noted. One was reported to twiddle pencils during interviews, another played with a piece of string, going through the same routine with it until a certain point when he draped it over his head and left it there. Determined as I was not to be a typical convalescent, one couldn't help noticing how all the most attractive doctors seemed herded on to this ward. . . .

A GROUP of us were trotted off once a week for mysterious injections and blood tests. There was an absolute campaign to find out what they were all about, but nobody ever did. One girl was so oppressed by the dark mystery she left the dinner table one day and sought out Sister. She returned with round eyes and breathed one word: "Hor-

mones." There was a concerned clucking and one youngster said softly: "Oo *er*." The gay little nurse I pestered for information told me the idea was to change our sex. In that case, the experiment was a wash-out, though nothing would have surprised me at the time.

The Rebel joined me a week or two later and I felt humbled. She had worked herself off Shock and upstairs the honourable way. She had not budged one iota, but as she said, neither had they, though they always had a good get-out for their defeats. There was a sprinkling of staunch mutterers in this ward, and the Rebel often gathered them about her and held forth, with myself as admiring audience. "They separate spirit from mind," she would contend. "Pagans!" stormed somebody else. The Rebel would continue: "I challenged them again the other day. I said: 'Does the Soul exist?' And the answer was: 'We don't know.'" This would raise a cry of Blasphemy! and old ladies within earshot would go a little pale and pat their buns with nervous fingers. Sometimes when a harassed-looking doctor was seen whistling across the courtyard as though ten devils were after him, the Rebel would say sarcastically: "Patient or Psychiatrist?" So while the noisy noodles vied with each other in extolling their doctors, the Worshipful Company of Murmurers sat round like seasoned warriors boasting of the times they'd put it over on the authorities. One girl joyously described how her health act had won her a weekend pass. She only wanted it for one reason. She made her will, put her affairs in order, and set off for the river. But she was a strong swimmer and the tide was wrong. But the fact of having fooled the experts gave her such a boost she never tried again.

#### IV

I STILL clung to a forlorn hope that at Out-Patients a helping hand would be extended to me and the riddles revolving endlessly in my mind would be solved. I could see no other way to achieve peace. The prospect of facing the outside world not only with all my old neuroses intact but with the added burden of the breakdown itself, was

frightening indeed. On my last day I was interviewed in the corridor by the dreamiest and least effective of my trio. He said he would be seeing me in future, at the Follow-up clinic, and then went into an impassioned account of the newest ballet at Covent Garden. I listened politely for some time then interrupted to ask what exactly this Follow-up clinic was—a periodical check-up to see if we were maintaining our slender grip, perhaps? A sort of head-patting association? “Just so,” he agreed cheerfully and hurried on to analyse the décor. “By the way,” he added as an afterthought, “I was pleased about the name you chose for your devil. I never did like that producer’s ideas on opera.” He rattled on, about opera now, but it was just background noise now. I was wildly excited, a stone lighter in spirit. One tiny piece of the great mystery had been solved by mistake.

When I was home I sat on the bed cursing myself for all that dutiful pouring out of tawdry secrets which anyway had been told before, to much more constructive friends. It had been useless. It made me look such a fool. And then I remembered something rather juicy I’d completely forgotten to include. This cheered me up a lot. With one piece of privacy to my credit, I almost felt an individual again.

It is hard to decide which is the worst stage of a nervous breakdown: the subtle sliding into its fringe; the floundering in its inky depths; or the painful dragging up on to the other shore. When one leaves the organised community of a mental hospital to face life outside, the contrast between the two worlds is so sharp that one’s breakdown stands out like a silhouette. For some time one lives closeted with the appalling picture of oneself out of control, while relations and some friends in their kindness try to pretend the thing never happened. The illness, colossal in its clarity, looms behind one like a gigantic pitch-black cavern waiting to swallow one back again. One felt let out on a string. A single false move, and all would be lost.

In these days of popularised psychology we all read books, hear plays, see films, and listen

to lordly talks about the wondrous cures wrought by grovelling in the subconscious. Therefore we go into hospital with hope and confidence. Alternating with the usual bouts of despair we see ourselves emerging the other side of the nightmare new and purged personalities. With what ardour we fill up the questionnaires, struggle through intelligence tests, hand in our paintings, and pour out our histories. And it is all swallowed up into the bowels of the organisation and never heard of again. More cynical patients assure one it is used for statistics and research. We are guinea-pigs. The stock answer to one’s questions is, “We-e-ell, these things go so deep.” Or sometimes: “You’re still very ill, you know.” One is cheerfully informed one can never be really normal without a full analysis, and unless one can run to a fiver a week for a couple of years, one must simply hope for the best. There is, so the balletomane young doctor told me, a very long waiting-list for analysis at the expense of the N.H.S., and he himself was in this queue. It was only for desperate cases. This did not strike me as unusual at the time, because the whole experience had been so *Through the Looking-glass*, both within and without one’s mind. The coffee came up before the soup, and things like that.

So as soon as one regains a shaky sort of control one is let loose. The morass of matter pulled out of one’s mind for airing is left to the patient to put back as best he can. One’s sense of loneliness is very acute. One has an urgent desire to understand one’s illness, to comb through every stage of the extraordinary miasma. Then one would feel safer. But there is nobody to help, so every spare moment is spent sorting out the chaos, trying to pat it into the sort of shape approved by the Experts. One goes through and through it, making quite sure one perfectly understands the whole business was mental from start to finish. Every tiny illusion lurking in the corners must be pounced on, reasoned with, labelled *Danger* and popped into one of the many matchboxes which seem to make up one’s mind these days. A constant spring-cleaning goes on, which is as wearing as any

other constant spring-cleaning. I used to stand at the sink sermonising to the potatoes, and suddenly my thoughts went slower and slower, like a gramophone running down. Or else they dashed ahead faster and faster and to my horror I was thinking gibberish. Or one sentence stuck in a groove. One is scrupulously careful with feelings and reactions which undergo rigid discipline, and one tiptoes through each day with one's mind in corsets.

AT THIS early stage one is overwhelmed with pity for mental sufferers amounting almost to anguish. One thinks of the friends still in hospital, of others struck down daily, some of whom one may pass in the street or sit next to in buses, and they are unaware of the hell in store for them. One broods over children in parks and babies in prams. Once when waiting to cross the road a little woman beside me burst out laughing. "They all popped up!" she said to nobody, "so I shook my umbrella at them." For a sickening minute I was jerked back into her world, and nearly saw them popping up.

Soon comes a violent wish never to see any of the friends in one's term, to banish everything that could remind one of the dark days. This in turn passes off and one is only too glad to see those friends and hear about others. A sense of comradeship develops unlike any other, and the more one shares the memory the more heightened become the shafts of humour in it.

All sorts of tiny happenings and specks of triumph encourage one in the daily struggle. One watches oneself piercingly for the slightest improvement. Progress is so gradual. It is only when one can look back on the shells of self strewn over six months or so that one can see any advance at all. One of the worrying things is sleep. It's fairly all right once you're there; it's the getting in and out of it. Just as you're sliding away, an incoherent babbling sets up outside your ears, a peremptory voice barks a sentence taken at random from the day's conversation, a set of grotesque faces flash before your closed eyes. You leap awake, calm down, and try again.

It may happen several times before you bridge the grisly gap. Emerging, too, is slow and painful (unpleasantly reminiscent of shock treatment), and you seem to be reading a page of printing on the screen of your mind, consisting of utter drivel. The presence of such glaring mental symptoms, even for a fraction of the day, is very disheartening. Once one has seen the truth about one's illness, one does expect everything to push off quietly. Surely when one no longer believes in one's imaginary voices, they have no business carrying on a monologue. But they do, in nocturnal snatches, and when more confidence has been gained from other improvements, one accepts their intrusion and ploughs through them into sleep instead of trying to organise them.

I suppose one expects too much all at once. A few weeks after my release I went to both dress rehearsals and performances of "The Ring" at Covent Garden. When I attended Out-Patients I complained that my attention kept wandering, and large notices in capital letters had been wont to arrive on the stage which were not part of the décor. The doctor said that he had never been able to concentrate on "The Ring," which was a comfort—until I remembered the queue he was in.

SOMETIMES when drawn into conversation in trains and shops I used to think with awe: "You don't know who you are talking to." It was like a guilty secret. After a few years it may feel like a criminal record where G.P.'s are concerned. Once the average doctor knows one has had a breakdown, one gets very much less sympathy and consideration than the more one had fondly expected, and may even be dismissed as a hypochondriac into the bargain. Naturally one is inclined to behave nervously if one senses this coldness, and after three such doctors, when we moved again I kept my Past very dark and was gratified to be treated as a rational being.

I was specially affected by this medical attitude on the occasion of my first confinement after a complicated pregnancy. I had the misfortune to land a hospital where there was

neither analgesia nor kindness. For some months afterwards I had a return of the going-to-sleep symptoms, to a most alarming degree, and by day was unable to escape from sneering remarks made to me in the labour ward. Two-and-a-half years later, after a healthy pregnancy my second child was born the near-painless way, though I had not seriously practised relaxation, thinking it waste of time for me. But between the two events I had drastically altered our diet, becoming vegetarian, cutting out all refined products, and baking wholewheat bread. My mental and physical health steadily improved, and my figure resumed human shape for the first time since the effects of deep insulin. These facts, culminating in the exhilarating experience of natural childbirth, have freed me from the shadow of my own mind at last. It is seven years since the illness. It is perhaps a minor point—though ardent food reformers would claim it as the major one—but it does seem strange that diet in mental hospitals is generally inappropriate. Starchy, sugary, white bread and white sugar—surely a surfeit of salads and fruit, two items we never had, would be more beneficial.

So although I realise myself still vulnerable should undue stress or tragedy occur, I have come a long way since that first year when the reactions of everybody to one's gruesome Past is worrying. At a dinner party with my

husband I was in a cold sweat wondering if they Knew. If they did, they might be studiously kind, a shade wary, or plain curious. If they did not, they would wonder what on earth was the matter if I said something idiotic or nothing at all. The two men present, both pathologists, discussed the play "Harvey." They quoted the best bits and we all laughed. This led to inspired imitations, and everyone roared. They related anecdotes from people they knew who knew people who saw things. Everyone rolled on the floor. My husband, perspiring gently, was busy folding me round with reassuring glances. Neither of the men possessing first-hand knowledge, and being saddened by this, they consoled themselves with a medical summing-up. It then dawned on me that the hour of supremacy we wait for all our lives, was upon me. I was the very person these brilliant men had longed to meet in the flesh. "Excuse me," I murmured, "but I've been seeing much more interesting things than rabbits, just lately." The announcement fell like a crash in the middle of the table. The men went beetroot in colour. The wives rushed in with first-aid, bandaged up the crisis, rinsed out the atmosphere, put my triumph in splints, and wheeled in a healthy topic which everybody leapt on and crammed with any old words that came to tongue. All the same, for a minute I had felt Somebody.

## Lines

I have refrained  
From trying to find  
A law and order in poetry:  
If you want rules  
And styles and schools  
Apply to the nearest cōtery.

*Burns Singer*

Lionel Trilling

## The Smile of Parmenides

*George Santayana in his Letters*

ONE doesn't have to read very far in Santayana's letters to become aware that it might be very hard to like this man—that, indeed, it might be remarkably easy to dislike him. And there is no point in struggling against the adverse feeling. The right thing to do is to recognise it, to admit it into consciousness, and to establish it beside that other awareness, which should come as early and which should be the stronger of the two—that Santayana was one of the most remarkable men of our time and that his letters are of classic importance.

To say that they are among the best of modern letters is not to say much, is not to say anything. I can think of no modern collections of letters—D. H. Lawrence's and Shaw's excepted—that aren't deeply depressing in their emptiness and lack of energy, in their frightening inability to suggest living spirit. To find an adequate point of comparison for Santayana's letters one has to go back to the 19th century. Santayana isn't, of course, equal to Keats as a letter-writer, but that one can even think to say that he isn't, is something. I am led to make the comparison not because the letters of Santayana and of Keats are similar in kind but because they are similar in effect. No recent book has taken possession of my mind as Santayana's has, commanding not assent (or not often)

but concurrence—I mean a literal “running along with,” the desire to follow where the writer leads. One of the effects of Keats's letters is to suggest that the writer holds in his mind at every moment a clear image of the actual quotidian world and also an image of the universe and of a mode of existence beyond actuality yet intimately related to actuality and, in a sense, controlling it. I don't pretend to understand Santayana's doctrine of essences, not having read the works in which he expounds it; nor, indeed, do I wholly understand Keats's doctrine of essences, although I do perceive that it was central to his thought. I suspect that the two doctrines have much in common and I recommend the exploration of this possibility to a competent philosopher. But quite apart from any connection that may be found between Santayana's thought and Keats's—it was certainly not an influence: Santayana read Keats in the old 19th century way, and was sceptical of the idea that Keats *thought* at all—what one finds in the two men as letter-writers is the force and seduction of their manner of thought, their impulse to think about human life in relation to a comprehensive vision of the nature of the universe.

It is this that accounts for the exhilaration that Santayana's letters induce, a sense of the mind suddenly freed, happily disenchanted,

active in a new way. Santayana has several times reminded us how close he was to the men of the English late 19th century, how great a part Ruskin and Arnold and Pater played in the formation of this thought. What one becomes aware of from the letters is how close he was to the English Romantics. For the kind of mental sensation he imparts is what the Romantic poets thought of as peculiarly appropriate to the mind, and they often represented it by images of the mind "soaring" or on a mountain peak: it was thus that they proposed the escape from the "bondage" of "earth," the ability to move at will in a sustaining yet unresisting medium, the possibility of looking at life in detachment, from a "height." This is a nearly forgotten possibility of the mind; it is not approved by the hidden, prepotent Censor of modern modes of thought. To look within is permitted; to look around is encouraged; but best not to look down—not realistic, not engaged, not democratic. One experiences the unsanctioned altitude with as much guilt as pleasure.

FOR this pleasure, or the reminder of pleasure, we are of course grateful to Santayana and drawn to him. Yet at the same time there is the easy possibility of disliking him, or at least of regarding him with ready suspicion. It shouldn't matter. It should, indeed, constitute an added charm. Let us just call it "tension" or "ambiguity" or "irony" or whatever name serves to remind us that there is a special intellectual satisfaction in admiring where we do not love, in qualifying our assent, in keeping our distance.

My own antagonism to Santayana goes back to my college days at Columbia. Irwin Edman, as all his students know, was a great admirer of Santayana and was said actually to be on terms of friendship with the great man. Edman had an amazing gift as a teacher. He could summarise the thought of a philosopher in a way both to do justice to his subject and to make it comprehensible to the meanest intelligence. Or, if the meanest intelligence didn't actually comprehend, it certainly had the sentiment of comprehen-

sion. This I can testify to, because, when it came to philosophy, I was the meanest intelligence going. I found it virtually impossible to know what issues were involved; I could scarcely begin to understand the questions, let alone the answers. But when Edman spoke with that wonderful systematic lucidity of his, all things seemed clear. With, for me, the exception of Santayana. Edman could never make plain to me what Santayana was up to.

If Santayana could now be consulted about why this was so, he would very likely explain that it was because Edman didn't really understand him. He seems to have come to think that no Jew and no Columbia man was likely to understand him. And of course Edman's allegiance to Santayana gradually abated and in the essay which he contributed to Professor Schilpp's *The Philosophy of George Santayana* he maintains that the later developments of the thought of the man who had been his master verged on the irrelevant and, perhaps, the immoral. And in the reply to his critics which Santayana makes in the same volume, he permits himself to speak of Edman's objections as showing a "personal animus."

Yet I have no doubt that Edman's account of Santayana was perfectly just and accurate. What stood in the way of my understanding it was a cherished prejudice. The college group to which I belonged, many of whom were more or less close to Edman, resisted that part of his thought which led him to understand and praise detachment. We were very down on Walter Pater, very hostile to what we called "æstheticism," and we saw Edman's enthusiasm for Santayana as of a piece with his admiration for Pater and as a proof of his mere "æstheticism." I have come to think that Pater is a very remarkable writer, much misrepresented by the critics and literary historians. But at the time we took him to be everything that was *fainéant* and disembodied and precious. Santayana seemed to some of us to be in the line of Pater, brought there if only by his prose, which even now I think is only occasionally really good because all too much of it is "beautiful," as the philosophers never weary

of telling us. The famous "perfection of rottenness" which William James said that Santayana's thought represented, was wholly apparent to us, and we did not use the phrase with any touch of the admiration that James really did intend.

In short, what Edman (if I read him aright) eventually came to feel about Santayana after a close study of the later work, I felt out of a prejudice based on hearsay. Against this prejudice not even Edman's lucidity and the sympathy he then had with Santayana's mind could make any headway. When an undergraduate entertains a critical prejudice against a literary or philosophical figure, the last person in the world who can change his mind is his teacher.

MY CASE, of course, was not unique. The feeling against Santayana in America is endemic and almost inevitable. It is indeed very difficult for an American, *qua* American—to use the crow-like expression of professional philosophers—to like him or trust him. Of course among the majority of the academic historians of American culture his name is mud. They hustle him off into the limbo they reserve for "aristocratic critics of American democracy." They find it wonderfully convenient to think of him as the "perfection of rottenness"—he is the Gilbert Osmond of their *Portrait of a Lady*, the Lady being America in the perfection of her democracy and innocence: he is a spoiled American, all too elegant, all too cultivated, all too knowing, all too involved with æsthetic values. Actually they are much mistaken. For one thing, Santayana was very severe in his attitude toward the æsthetic experience—as severe as William James and for rather better reasons. This is one of the remarkable and salutary things about him. He was not in the least taken in by the modern pieties about art; and as he grew older art meant less and less to him, and he thought that it should. As for his rejection of America, it is a good deal more complex, not to say cogent, than historians of American culture usually care to remember. America, it is true, seemed to have affected him ad-

versely in an almost physical way, making him anxious and irritable. But it was to a particular aspect of American life that he directed his antagonism, the aspect of what we, with him, may call its gentility, the aspect of its high culture. And what the academic historian of American culture would do without Santayana's phrase "the genteel tradition" is impossible to imagine. Santayana was ill at ease everywhere in America, but what offended his soul was New England, especially Boston, especially Cambridge. The America of raw energy, the America of material concerns, the America that he could see as young and barbaric and in the line of history he had a tolerance and affection for that were real and not merely condescending. Some years ago the late Bernard De Voto raised a storm of protest and contempt among American intellectuals because he wrote in praise of a certain research on the treatment of third degree burns and insisted that this was a cultural achievement of the first order, that it was an intellectual achievement; he said that it was a fault in American intellectuals that they were not aware of it and did not take pride in it as a characteristic achievement of the American mind. Santayana would have been in agreement with De Voto. In a letter of 1921 to Logan Pearsall Smith, he writes of high American culture as being ineffectual and sophomoric. "But notice:" he goes on, "*all* learning and 'mind' in America is not of this ineffectual Sophomoric sort. There is your Doctor at Baltimore who is a great expert, and *really knows how to do things*: and you will find that, in the service of material life, all the arts and sciences are prosperous in America. But it must be in the service of material life; because it is material life (of course with the hygiene, morality, and international good order that can minister to material life) that America has and wants to have and may perhaps bring to perfection. Think of that! If material life could be made perfect, as (in a very small way) it was perhaps for a moment among the Greeks, would not that of itself be a most admirable achievement, like the creation of a new and superior mammal, who would instinctively suck only

the bottle? . . . And possibly on that basis of perfected material life, a new art and philosophy would grow unawares, not similar to what we call by those names, but having the same relation to the life beneath which art and philosophy amongst us ought to have had, but never have had actually. You see I am content to let the past bury its dead. It does not seem to me that we can impose on America the task of imitating Europe. The more different it can come to be, the better; and we must let it take its own course, going a long way round, perhaps, before it can shake off the last trammels of alien tradition, and learn to express itself simply, not apologetically, after its own heart."

Here, surely, is the perfect dream, the shaping Whitmanesque principle, of the academic historian of American culture. Santayana, it is true, formulates it with a touch of irony and, indeed, on another occasion he avowed his belief that everything good in "the ultimate sense" would come to America from Europe only, and from Latin Europe; and of course he was glad that he would not live to see the new American culture come into being. Yet he had too strong a sense of history, too clear an understanding of cultures, not to be as serious as he was ironic.

NO, IT is not really Santayana's open rejection of America that troubles us about him. His feelings about America go very deep, go to his first principles. That is why they cannot be related to the shabby canting anti-Americanism of the intellectual middle class of England or of the Continent. A good many things may no doubt be said in dispraise of Santayana, but it cannot be said of him that he had a vulgar mind, that he could possibly think as the *New Statesman* thinks. There was no malice in Santayana's feeling about America, nor does he ever give evidence that he had ever been *offended* by America—he had none of the provincial burgher's hurt vengeful pride which led Dostoevsky to write *A Winter Diary* to get in his kicks at France, or Graham Greene to write *The Quiet American*.

What does alienate Americans from Santa-

yana is the principles upon which his rejection of America is founded. That is, what troubles us is not his negations of America, but the affirmation upon which he based his sense of himself as a European. These disturb us, they put questions to us which we cannot endure.

It isn't possible to speak of Santayana as a representative European. To do so would be to give modern Europe more credit than it deserves. But he was, we might say, the Platonic form or "idea" of a European. To the development of this idea America was necessary. It was not enough for him to have been Santayana of Avila in Castille; there had also to be the Sturgis connection, and Boston, and Harvard. Santayana repelled the belief that as a boy in Boston he had lived an isolated and unhappy life because he was of foreign birth. He was, he writes, the lieutenant-colonel of the Boston Latin School regiment, he acted in the Hasty Pudding plays at Harvard, he was devoted—"as a spectator"—to football. Yet he did stand apart; and he was able to look at the culture into which he had been transplanted with a degree of consciousness that was available to no other lieutenant-colonel and to no other leading lady of a Hasty Pudding play. He knew it to be not his culture, and he lived to develop its opposite principle, the idea of a European culture. This was, to be sure, not monolithically European; England, France, Spain, Italy, Greece were all separate to him, sharp, clear entities which had different values for him at different stages of his life. But, in contrast to America, they came together as a single idea, they made the idea of Europe.

If we ask what it was that Santayana thought of as separating him from America, as making him characteristically and ideally European (and a philosopher), the answer is that it was his materialism. He seems to have found it very difficult to convince people that he really was a materialist. No doubt in his more technical works there are grounds for the resistance to his claim that his materialism was basic to all his thought; of these I have no knowledge. But one reason for the resistance is that people don't expect materialists

to compose in highly wrought prose, exquisite and sometimes all too exquisite; we don't expect subtlety and vivacity, supposing, no doubt, that materialists must partake of the dull density of "matter"; we don't expect them to give a very high value to poetry and all fictions, especially the fictions of religions. In 1951 Santayana finds it necessary to write, "Naturalism . . . is something to which I am so thoroughly wedded that I like to call it materialism, so as to prevent all confusion with the *romantic* naturalism, like Goethe's, for instance, or that of Bergson. Mine is the hard, non-humanistic naturalism of the Ionian philosophers, of Democritus, Lucretius, and Spinoza." And he goes on: "Those professors at Columbia who tell you that in my *Idea of Christ in the Gospels* I incline to theism have not read that book sympathetically. They forget that my naturalism is fundamental and includes man, his mind, and all his works, products of the generative order of nature."

From Santayana's materialism comes his detachment. Maybe, of course, if we want to look at it psychologically, it is the other way around—the materialism rationalises the detachment which was temperamental. But certainly the two things go together in Santayana, just as they did in Spinoza, who was perhaps Santayana's greatest hero of thought. The world is matter, and follows the laws of matter. The world is even, he is willing to say, a machine, and follows the laws of its devising. The world is not spirit, following the laws of spirit, made to accommodate spirit, available to full comprehension by spirit. It permits spirit to exist but this is by chance and chancily: no intention is avowed. And the world, we might go on to say, is Boston to the boy from Avila; the world is the Sturgis family to the young Santayana—not hostile, yet not his own, not continuous with him. It is, as he says, his host, and he must have reflected that the word implies not only a guest but a parasite!

WHEN Bouvard and Pécuchet gave themselves to the study of Spinoza, Flaubert's favourite philosopher, they felt as

if they were in "a balloon at night, in glacial coldness, carried on an endless journey towards a bottomless abyss and with nothing near but the unseizable, the motionless, the eternal." We do not feel *quite* this as we read Santayana's letters. They are far too full of intended grace, of conscious charm, too full of the things of this world. But the abyss is there, and his dreadful knowledge of it is what Americans fear in Santayana, just as it is the American avoidance of the knowledge of the abyss that made Santayana fear America and flee it. The knowledge of the abyss, the awareness of the discontinuity between man and the world, this is the forming perception of Santayana's thought as it comes to us in the letters. It is already in force at the age of twenty-three—it makes itself manifest in the perfectly amazing self-awareness and self-possession of the letters he writes from his first trip abroad just after his graduation from Harvard. The philosophical detachment is wholly explicit; and we see at once that it is matched by a personal detachment no less rigorous. For Santayana friendship was always of high special importance. He could be a loyal and devoted friend, as witness his constancy to the unfortunate and erratic Frank Russell, Bertrand Russell's elder brother, his predecessor in the earldom; he could be finely sympathetic, as witness his letter to Iris Origo on the death of her only son. But friendship had for him a status in his life like that of art. Art, however lovely, however useful, was not reality; at best it was an element of reality; and sometimes, he said, it interfered with the apprehension of reality. So too he never deceived himself about friendship; its limits were clear to him very early and he never permitted himself to be deceived into thinking that a friend was himself. Nothing could be more striking than Santayana's equal devotion and remoteness to his youthful letters to his friends. He put all his intelligence and all his sympathy at their service, but never himself. It is, in its own way, very fine; but no American reader, I think, can help being made uncomfortable by this stern and graceful self-possession, this rigorous objec-

tivity, this strict limitation, in so very young a man.

And our American discomfort is the more intense, I believe, because we cannot but perceive that Santayana's brilliant youthful reserve is his response to his youthful consciousness of what I have called the abyss. His friend Henry Ward Abbott writes to him out of one of those states of cosmological despair which were common enough among young men even as late as 1887, asking Santayana to consider the problem of life from "the point of view of the grave"; Santayana replies in this fashion: "What you call the point of view of the grave is what I should call the point of view of the easy chair. [That is, the point of view of detached philosophic contemplation.] From that the universal joke is indeed very funny. But a man in his grave is not only apathetic, but also invulnerable. That is what you forget. Your dead man is not merely amused, he is also brave, and if his having nothing to gain makes him impartial, his having nothing to lose makes him free. 'Is it worth while after all?' you ask. What a simple-hearted question. Of course it isn't worth while. Do you suppose when God made up his mind to create this world after his own image, he thought it was worth while? I wouldn't make such an imputation on his intelligence. Do you suppose he existed there in his uncaused loneliness because it was worth while? Did Nothing ask God before God existed, whether he thought it would be worth while to try life for a while? or did Nothing have to decide the question? Do you suppose the slow, painful, nasty, bloody process, by which things in this world grow, is worth having for the sake of the perfection of a moment? Did you come into the world because you thought it worth while? No more do you stay in it because you do. The idea of demanding that things should be worth doing is a human impertinence."

But then, when Abbot continues the question in a later letter, Santayana says, "The world may have little in it that is good: granted. But that little is really and inalienably good. Its value cannot be destroyed because of the surrounding evil."

It is a startling thing for a youth to say, as startling as his exposition of the point of view of the grave, and these two utterances may surely be thought of as definitive of Santayana's later thought. Whatever his materialism leads Santayana to, it does not lead him to a radical relativism pointing to an ultimate nihilism. It does not lead him to a devaluation of life, to the devaluation of anything that might be valued. On the contrary—it is the basis of his intense valuation. Here indeed, we might almost say, is one *intention* of his materialism, that it should lead to a high valuation of what may be valued at all. If we are in a balloon over an abyss, let us at least value the balloon. If night is all around, then what light we have is precious. If there is no life to be seen in the great emptiness, our companions are to be cherished; so are we ourselves. And this, I think, is the essence of the European view of life as it differs from the American. Willa Cather is not in my opinion a very intelligent or subtle mind, but she did show in her novels an understanding of the European attachment to *things* and how it differed from the American attachment. The elaborate fuss that she made about cuisine, about wine, and salads, and bread, and copper pots was an expression of her sense of the unfeeling universe; cookery was a ritual in which the material world, some tiny part of it, could be made to serve human ends, could be made human; and insofar as she represents cookery as a ritual, it is the paradigm of religious belief, and goes along with her growing sympathy for Catholicism, of which the chief attraction seemed to be not any doctrinal appeal it had but rather its being *so very European*. That is, what hope the Catholic religion offered her took its sanction from the European confrontation of the abyss—the despair that arises from the knowledge of the material nature of the world validates all rituals and all fictions that make life endurable in the alien universe.

IF I apprehend Santayana aright, what Miss Cather felt in a very simple way, he felt in a very elaborate way. That is why he was

so acutely uncomfortable in America. Santayana knew that America was not materialistic, not in the philosophic sense and not really in the moral sense. What he says about America's concern with the practical life and with "material well-being" does not contradict this. If anything, it substantiates it.

For if the Americans were truly materialistic, they would recognise the necessity of dualism, they would have contrived a life of the spirit apart from and in opposition to the life of material concern. But for the American consciousness the world is the natural field of the spirit, laid out to be just that, as a baseball diamond or a tennis court is laid out for a particular kind of activity; and what the American wins is not enjoyed as a possession but, rather, cherished as a trophy. The European sees the world as hard and resistant to spirit; whatever can be won is to be valued, protected, used, and enjoyed. But the high valuation of the material life makes, as it were, the necessity for its negation in an intense respect for the life of spirit.

What exasperated Santayana was the American refusal to confront the hard world that materialism proposes, the American preference for seeing the world as continuous with spirit. His animus against Emerson's transcendentalism was extreme, and what he felt about Emerson he felt about all of American philosophic thought, as we see from the brilliant *Character and Opinion in the United States*. The inclusion of the word "character" in that title is significant. One of the things that must especially involve our interest in the letters is what we perceive to be a chief preoccupation of the writer—the concern for character, for self-definition, for self-preservation. This concern is intimately related to Santayana's materialism. Santayana defined himself in the universe by detachment from it. And what is true of him in the largest possible connection is also true of him in smaller connections. Thus, he had no sooner received his first Harvard appointment than he began to think of the moment when he could retire from Harvard, which he did at the first possible opportunity. It was not merely that he was a foreigner, or that he saw

himself as of a different breed from the American academic, or that he could not support what, in an early letter, he calls the "damnable worldliness and snobbishness prevalent at Harvard." It was rather that he needed to define himself by withdrawal.

And how very precise his self-definition is. We see it in the cool self-possession of his dealings with William James. In his early relation with Santayana, James as a teacher is in a very different rôle from that in which we find him in that all too famous anecdote of Gertrude Stein at Radcliffe, when, to Gertrude Stein's having written nothing in her examination book except the statement that the afternoon was too fine for examinations, James replied with agreement and an A for the course. I have never admired James for this—it seems to me that he gave an unfortunate impetus to all the contemporary student cant about how teachers ought to behave, that, for example, they should be *human*. I like much better James's coming down on Santayana for not having done the conventional thing with his travelling fellowship; I like it in part because it gave Santayana the opportunity to stand up to his superior and to affirm himself and to hold himself ready to take the consequences. And this he does in a way that no American youth could have equalled, with a sincere regard for James, with a perfect if not wholly ingenuous courtesy, with the full sanction of his view of the world, an entire readiness to wipe out his academic career before it should have begun. It isn't exactly endearing; it makes the beginning of our sense that we shall not like Santayana at all. But it is very impressive, it is even very fortifying.

THAT sense of himself which Santayana shows in his letters to James was what he saw lacking in American life. His novel, *The Last Puritan*, is, as he says, about a man who, with all the personal and material gifts, "peters out," and the tragedy of this he felt to be so terrible that he "actually cried over the writing of it." He speaks of the petering out of most of the young American poets who

do not escape to hibernate in Europe. And petering out was, it seems, the fate of most of his Harvard friends—it was not that they were worn out by American life, nor that they were hampered by economic circumstances, or perverted by bad ideals; it was that they did not know how to define themselves, they did not know how to grasp and possess; we might say that they did not know how to break their hearts on the idea of the hardness of the world, to admit the defeat which is requisite for any victory, to begin their effective life in the world by taking the point of view of the grave. Perhaps the whole difference between Santayana and America is summed up in an exchange between him and William Lyons Phelps. No two men could have been more worlds apart than Phelps and Santayana, but Santayana liked Phelps—he was American academic life, and American kindness, he was all the massive excitement of the Yale-Harvard game, which Santayana relished, making it a point always to stay with the Phelps when the game was in New Haven. When *The Last Puritan* appeared Phelps was distressed by the book and Santayana had to deal with his objection that he did not “love life” and also with the objection that there were no “good people” in the book. To which Santayana replied, “I don’t think you like *good* people, really, only sweet people—like Annabel [Mrs. Phelps] and you!” The sentence seems to me momentous in its definition of American life. In that life sweetness is an academic trait, and very lovely and valuable it is. But we find it very hard to imagine that definition of character which is necessary for the strain of what Santayana calls goodness.

As for Santayana himself, his effort of self-definition had, in some ways, an amazing success. He was manifestly not a sweet man, although there are some engagingly kind letters to people whose defences he knew to be weak, students, young philosophers, old friends who suddenly called themselves to mind after half a century. That he was a good man has been questioned and the question seems to me a very reasonable one—there is certainly something deeply disquieting about

his temperament. But there can be no doubt of the firmness of his self-definition; there can be no doubt that he did not peter out. The surrender of hope that he made at an early age, the admission of defeat that many interpret as an essential cynicism or even as a kind of malevolence may not be life-giving to most of his readers; but it was a regimen that preserved him in life in a way that must astound us. He lived to be nearly ninety, and up to the end there is no intellectual event that he does not respond to with full alertness and full power and full involvement. His comments on Edna St. Vincent Millay make a definitive estimate of her; a few years later he is no less precise about Faulkner. He absorbed Freud far better than most intellectuals and his essay on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* deals in a remarkable way with Freud’s materialistic assumptions that would make Santayana sympathetic to him. He is much interested in the poetry of Robert Lowell, and also in the stories of Somerset Maugham, the point of his interest in the latter being his “wonder at anybody wishing to write such stories.” In general he is responsive to the modern element in literature—he was fascinated by Joyce and captivated by Proust; but he says he has no enthusiasm for D. H. Lawrence, Dostoevsky, and Nietzsche: he has had from Aristotle all they can give him. The vivacity and cogency of his mind never abate.

IN THE letter to Abbot which I quoted earlier he had written that “the point of view of the grave is not to be attained by you or me every time we happen to want anything in particular. It is not gained except by renunciation. Pleasure must first cease to attract and pain to repel, and this, you will confess, is no easy matter. But meantime, I beg of you, let us remember that the joke of things is one at our expense. It is very funny, but it is exceedingly unpleasant.” The ironic smile at the universal joke never left the face of his writing, but neither, I think, did the sense of how unpleasant the joke was. The smile drove philosophers to distraction and

led some of them to say that he wasn't a philosopher at all—maybe a poet. "If you took [my lucubrations] more lightly perhaps you would find them less aggravating," he wrote to Professor Lamprecht. He himself thought a smile might say much—in a letter to Father Munson he speaks of the impor-

tance in his philosophic life of a passage of Plato's *Parmenides* "about 'ideas' of filth, rubbish, etc., which the moralistic young Socrates recoils from as not beautiful, making old Parmenides smile. That smile of Parmenides made me think." Of Santayana's smile we feel it does no less.

## The Birth of Tragedy

AND me happiest when I compose poems.  
 Love, power, the huzza of battle  
 are something, are much;  
 yet a poem includes them like a pool  
 water and reflection.  
 In me, nature's divided things—  
 tree, mould on tree—  
 have their fruition;  
 I am their core. Let them swap,  
 bandy, like a flame swerve  
 I am their mouth; as a mouth I serve.

And I observe how the sensual moths  
 big with odour and sunshine  
 dart into the perilous shrubbery;  
 or drop their visiting shadows  
 upon the garden I one year made  
 of flowering stone: to be a footstool  
 for the perfect gods  
 who, friends to the ascending orders,  
 will sustain this passionate meditation  
 and call down pardons  
 for the insurgent blood.

A quiet madman, never far from tears,  
 I lie like a slain thing  
 under the green air the trees  
 inhabit, or rest upon a chair  
 towards which the inflammable air  
 tumbles on many robins' wings;  
 noting how seasonably  
 leaf and blossom uncurl  
 and living things arrange their death,  
 while someone from afar off  
 blows birthday candles for the world.

Irving Layton

IRVING LAYTON (1912- ). *Montreal. Teaches in Montreal. His books include: Here and Now, Now is the Place, The Black Hurtsmen, The Cold Green Element, and The Bull Calf.*

Gore Vidal

## A Moment of Green Laurel

MY absent-mindedness seems to have only to do with places; I have little difficulty in recalling either names or faces and I usually get to appointments on time although, even in this, I've become a bit careless lately. Last week I arrived for an appointment not only at the wrong hour but at the wrong address, a somewhat disturbing experience. But now the Treasury Building was straight ahead and I was relieved that I could still find my way so easily through the streets of Washington, a city I'd not lived in for many years.

Thousands of people crowded the sidewalks, for this was Inauguration Day and all were eager to watch the new President ride in state to the Capitol for the inaugural ceremony. The crowd was in a gala mood, though the sky was dull, promising rain.

With difficulty, I crossed the street to Willard's Hotel. At the curb I was stopped by the pillar of some Mid-Western community, a pillar now wreathed in alcohol. In one hand he carried a small banner and in the other a bottle of whisky with no label (I did not then guess the significance of this detail). "Things going change in this town. Take it from me." Gracefully, I took it from him and, avoiding the bottle proffered, moved as quickly as I could to the hotel entrance, and went inside.

Willard's has two lobbies: one on the "F" Street side and one on the Pennsylvania Avenue side, parallel to it; the lobbies are connected by a carpeted, mirrored, marbled

corridor where I was able to find a sofa to sit on that I might comfortably observe the hundreds of people who now passed from street to avenue, all hurrying, all delighted.

Out of loyalty to our elegant Washington society, I decided these noisy passers-by must be from out of town; thick business-men with rimless glasses, South-Westerners with stetsons and boots, New York ladies in silver fox . . . all political and all, for one reason or another, well pleased with the new President. Some carried whisky flasks, I noticed: the first I'd seen since I was a child and Prohibition was, in theory, law. Apparently, flasks had come back, as the advertisers would say.

A POLITICAL personage sat down beside me, his right buttock, a boney one, glancing off my thigh as he squeezed a place for himself on the sofa. He wiggled about, making more room for himself. I scowled, unnoticed.

"You sure get mighty tired standing around," he said at large, stumbling on truth. I agreed. He was southern, and he talked to me, and from time to time I nodded with discreet half-attention, pretending to look for someone, hoping to excuse thereby my inattention. I even squinted near-sightedly as though a familiar face had suddenly appeared among strangers. Then one did. I saw my grandfather, white-haired and ruddy-faced, approach with a political colleague. He was smiling at something the other was saying. As they passed in front of me, I heard my

grandfather say: "He knows as well as you do what I think of gold. . . ."

By the time I'd got to my feet, upsetting the Southerner, the ghost was gone. My stomach contracted nervously; it had been someone else, of course. I have always had a habit of looking for likenesses. I will often notice a young boy and think: why, there's so-and-so! He was in school with me. Then I'd recall that my acquaintance would be a grown man by now, no longer fourteen. Nevertheless, disturbed by this vision of my dead grandfather, I got to my feet and went into the Pennsylvania Avenue lobby. Here, among palms and portraits of the new President, more politicians and hangers-on celebrated the great moment with noise, whisky, and thunderous goodwill.

"Come on up," said a woman beside me. She was blonde, well-dressed, a little drunk, and in a friendly mood. "We've got a suite upstairs. We're having a party. We're going to watch the parade . . . Emily!" And Emily joined us too, and we all went up in the elevator together.

The suite was two rooms hired weeks in advance for this day. The party had already begun: thirty or forty men and women, young office-holders for the most part, although there were, I soon discovered, some native Washingtonians too: parasitic figures to the business of government.

I was given a glass of champagne and left alone. My hostess and Emily, arm in arm, broke through circle after circle, penetrating to the centre of the party. I could hear their laughter long after they had vanished.

I moved slowly about the room. It was like a dance, and I wished for the sake of appearances that I had a partner. There is something profoundly negative about standing alone on the outskirts of a group where everyone has arrived, like animals in a Noah's Ark, in twos, and departs in twos. I thought of floods.

I FINISHED the champagne, wondering idly why I knew no one in the room. The city's changed, I thought; I'd been away ten years, a long time. I crossed the room to the

window and looked out at the parade which had begun. Loud-speakers at each street corner made the Inaugural Address audible but unintelligible. Something had gone wrong with the synchronisation and the loud-speakers echoed one another dismally, confusing the Presidential voice. The woman next to me remarked, "It doesn't make any sense."

I looked at her and saw to my surprise that it was my mother who had spoken. "What're you doing here?" I asked.

"What am I . . . ?" She looked puzzled. "Dorothy . . . you know Dorothy, don't you? asked. . . ." There was too much noise and I could not hear the rest of this sentence.

"But I thought you were going to stay home today?"

She looked at me oddly and I realised she hadn't heard me. Conversation was now impossible. People shoved us, gave us drinks, greeted her enthusiastically. As I watched her I wondered, as I often do, at all the people she knows. It was apparent that during the many years I have been away from Washington, a whole new group had come to town, and she knew them all.

"How long've you been here?" she asked brightly.

"I got here just a few minutes ago."

"No, I meant how long. . . ." But a large cavalry officer came between us. Isolated by his enormous, uniformed back, I looked out the window.

The sky was pale. Night loitered behind the dome of the Capitol where the President, with unusual resonance for him, had just finished his address. Below my window, soldiers were marching, and the mob which lined both sides of the Avenue murmured at their ordered progress.

"How do you like it?" my mother asked, pitching her voice above the noise of the room; the cavalry officer had gone.

"Just like all the others we've seen."

"I meant Washington."

I paused. We had been through this so many times before. "Well, you know what I think. . . ."

"I know . . . ?"

"I meant it's just as dull as it always was." Then I thought she said: "How long did you live here before?" But since there was now so much confusion in the room I was not positive. I cleared my throat; men separated us. She was looking, I thought, extremely handsome. I hadn't seen her look so fine in years.

**B**UT now something unusual was happening outside. The noise of the crowd increased its volume like a radio being turned up or like an approaching earthquake which can always be heard in advance: a distant rumbling as the ground ripples in ever-widening circles from the disturbed centre. Responding to this urgent sound, the people in the room pushed towards the windows to regard the new President who passed beneath us in an open car. He lifted his top hat and waved it. Then he was gone and the shouting died away.

"Are you going back to the house?" I asked, turning to my mother. We were together again, circled by Air Corps officers.

She frowned vaguely. "I suppose I'll see you later... some time," she added, and before I could answer, a squad of women, wearing paper hats and blowing horns, divided the room with the fury of their passage and I took that wise moment to leave the party, narrowly avoiding the gift of a paper hat.

I wondered, as I walked back to the hotel, why my mother had been at that party. I realise that she knows a good many people nowadays that I don't know: people who've come to town in the years I have been away, travelling farther and farther from Washington, without regret or longing, always conscious, however, that nostalgia for place may yet occur in time. My family is a sentimental one and more and more I tend to believe in the heredity of behaviour. I shall probably be very moved one day at the thought of spring (or autumn) in Rock Creek Park, where most of my childhood was spent, in a grey stone house on a hill, bordered by a steep lawn, by maple and oak trees, among

wooded hills crossed by the narrow, fast, iron-brown Rock Creek.

As I walked, I contemplated the election and the Inauguration which meant much less to me than I publicly pretended. I have a conviction that individuals have little to do with state affairs, that governments are essentially filing systems which eventually break down for lack of cabinet space, clerks, typewriters, paper and, perhaps, faith in order. More and more I find it difficult to take public matters seriously: a definite schizoid tendency, as a psychologist friend of mine once observed, confining me symbolically within a grey rubber sack where, cut-off from the world outside, I might regard with neither pleasure nor dismay the interior of my private realm, complacent at having escaped so neatly, so thoroughly.

**I** WAS now on the outskirts of Rock Creek Park. Obeying an impulse, I turned into the Park and walked down to Broad Branch Road, past Pierce's Mill... named for that good President who gave Hawthorne a consulate.

As I walked, day ended. The planet Venus, a circle of silver in a green sky, pierced the edge of the evening while the wintry woods darkened about me, and in the stillness the regular sound of my footsteps striking the pavement was like the rhythmic beating of a giant stone heart.

At last I came to the hill where, at the top of a serpentine drive, our old house stood, a solid grey house, owned now by strangers. I was about to continue on, when a young boy crossed the road, coming from the creek.

He was half-grown, with silver hair and dark eyes. In his arms he carried several branches of laurel. When he saw me, he stopped. Then, magically, the street lamps went on, ending twilight, shadowing our faces.

"You live up there?"

"Yes." His voice was light, not yet changed. He moved the green branches from one arm to another, tentatively, as though undecided whether to stay and talk or to go home. "It's my grandfather's house."

"Have you lived there long?"

"Most of my life. You know my grandfather?"

I said I did not. "But I used to live in that house, too... when I was about your age. My grandfather built it thirty years ago."

"No, I don't think so. *Mine* built it a long time ago: when I was born."

I smiled, not questioning this. "How old are you?" I asked.

"Twelve," he said, embarrassed he was not older. In the unshaded white light, his hair glittered like metal.

Then I asked the traditional questions about school: adults and children meet always as foreigners with a limited common vocabulary and mutual distrust. I should have liked to talk to him as an equal, I thought: my eyes on the green only, not on silver or on brown skin. There was a directness about him which is rare among children who usually are not only careful but often downright political in their dealings with the larger people. I asked questions by rote: "What do you like best in school?"

"Reading. My grandfather has a big library..."

"In the attic," I said, remembering my own childhood.

"Yes, in the attic," he said, wonderingly. "How did you know?"

"We kept books there, too, thousands of them."

"So do we. I like the history ones."

"And the Arabian Nights."

He looked surprised. "Yes. How did you know?"

I nodded, looking at him directly for the first time: a square, brown face between silver hair and green laurel, a beardless, smooth face, uncomplicated by lines or dry skin or broken veins or by character which, once formed, like a poison in the blood, corrupts the face. The street lamp was directly overhead, revealing the familiar skull. We looked at one another and I knew I should say something, ask yet another question, but

I could not, and so we stood until at last, to stop this silence, I repeated: "Do you like school?"

"No. You live in Washington?"

"I used to... when I lived up there." I indicated the hill. "Before the war."

"That was a long time ago," said the boy, frowning, and time, I remembered, depends on how old one is: ten years, nothing to me now, was all his life.

"Yes, a long time ago."

HE SHIFTED his weight from one foot to another. "Where do you live now?"

"In New York... sometimes. Have you been there?"

"Oh, yes. I don't like it."

I smiled, remembering as a child the prejudice Washington people had for New York. "What are you going to do with these?" I asked, touching a branch of laurel. "Make wreaths the way the Romans did?" I remembered an illustrated Victorian edition of Livy in which all the heroes wore Apollo's laurel.

He looked at me with surprise; then he smiled. "Yes, I do that sometimes."

Nothing has changed, I thought, and the terror began.

"I have to go," he said, stepping out of the circle of electric light.

"Yes, it's time for dinner." From the top of the hill a woman's voice called a name which made us both start.

"I have to go," he said again. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

I watched him as he clambered straight up the hill and across the lawn, not following the paved driveway. I continued to watch until the front door opened and he stepped into the yellow light. Then, as I walked away, down the road between the dark evening hills, I wondered if I should ever recall an old encounter with a stranger who had asked me odd questions about our house, and about the green laurel which I carried in my arms.

William Plomer

## Notes from South Africa

THE various designations of the various kinds of people here might be worth the attention of an anthropologist. The basic categories of white and non-white are not satisfactory. Bureaucracy, not biology, has the boldness to try and draw a line between them. It would be just as logical to speak of blacks and non-blacks, but this would give great offence to the latter. If one looks at the whites one sees that they are seldom white; they are generally of a pale tan, and sometimes beige or scarlet. The blacks are generally brown.

This morning in the park the American I was with thought that we might sit in the sun. "But clearly," he said, "these benches can't be used by me." They were all marked *Europeans Only*. "As I am not a European," he said, "where am I to sit down?" I told him he was neither more nor less European than the white South Africans who were sitting on the seats, and whose forebears had perhaps lived in South Africa for several generations.

The inscription on the seat was in Afrikaans as well as in English, and from where we sat we could see a sign saying *Car Park* — *Kar Park*. Such is bilingualism. Those who used to be spoken of as the Boers or the Dutch call themselves the Afrikaners. One must not call them Afrianders, because that is the name of a breed of cattle. And they would not speak of the Boer War or the South African War: for them it is the Second War of Independence.

That the white South Africans who speak

Afrikaans call themselves Afrikaners is not pleasing to the so-called Blacks, who regard themselves as Africans, call themselves Abantu, and are officially known as non-whites or non-Europeans. In the streets of Durban one sees the puzzling sign *Europeans and non-Europeans: Bus Stop*. This designation seems to include everybody, and therefore to be unnecessary. One might as well say *Eskimos and non-Eskimos*. What it means is that whites and non-whites may take the same bus but must occupy different parts of it.

I was brought up never to speak of non-whites as Kaffirs, a name which carries with it a painful association of contempt. It is still widely used, often as a deliberate insult. It used to be considered seemly to use the term "the Natives." That term is still in use, but is hardly precise: I myself, though white, or pinkish-white, am a native of South Africa. Certain kinds of persons are defined in acts of the South African Parliament as "foreign natives," which, a legal acquaintance tells me, means non-white inhabitants of Africa from outside the Union of South Africa.

My American companion, speaking in his direct and non-European way as he sat with me on the seat marked *Europeans Only*, said, "Well, they're all South Africans, aren't they?" "If only they would look at themselves in that light," I said. "In this morning's paper a countryman of yours, Mr. Walter Krieger, president of the U.S. Tool and Die Institute in Chicago, is quoted as saying, 'I would not invest one dime in South Africa in the present circumstances.' About the

inhabitants he says, "They must all be in South Africa because they like it. So why can't they get together and do something for it?" In fact a great many white foreign natives are taking a more favourable view of the prospects of investment in South Africa than Mr. Krieger, and the inhabitants are not all in South Africa because they like it. A good many would like to get out of it but cannot, for want of opportunity, money, or a passport. Mr. Krieger's question about why they can't get together cannot be asked often enough. Much more than the stability of investments depends upon an answer being found, and found soon."

**T**HERE are white South Africans who seize eagerly upon any evidence of colour discrimination in the United States or in England, such as the recent school segregation troubles in the South. They do not conceal their hope that West Indian immigration into England may lead to awkward situations and so to a greater understanding of South Africa's so-called "colour problem."

THE Cape Coloured people, who formerly enjoyed some political advantages but had a low standard of living, are now in many instances, I am told, enjoying a higher standard of living. They are employed in some industries because they have been found more skilful than the black and more reliable than the white former operatives.

THE most solemn thing I have seen for a long time was a squad of non-white female convicts marching out of a country railway station in the Transvaal this morning. They marched away in silence, with perfect precision and far more grace and dignity than one would see in any uniformed body of white women. They all wore scarlet mob-caps and were preceded and followed by a truncheon-bearing wardress of their own race. A convict in the last rank had a baby sitting in the small of her back, held there by a shawl round her waist. As she marched away its head nodded rhythmically from side to side. It is conceivable that mother and child were better fed and more contented than they

would have been otherwise. It is not altogether cynical to think that, enrolled in a community with regular habits ordained by a higher authority, the woman may have felt a shade more cheerful and secure than in whatever conditions drove her to whatever crime she had committed. The feelings and experiences of a woman like that—what a subject for a novelist! South African writers of fiction often write well, with sympathy and insight, of African domestic servants, generally the only kind of Africans they know anything about. The kind of white South Africans who know anything about the private lives of female African convicts are not likely to be fictionists, but Alan Paton's experience of reformatory administration has been of capital importance for South African literature. South Africa has a high prison population. It is said that five out of every 1,000 whites and twenty-eight out of every 1,000 non-whites are in gaol.

**A** BLACK clergyman and his wife were seen by a white policeman sitting in a closed car parked among other cars on the front at Durban. They had wished to look at the Indian Ocean and inhale the breeze. They were harshly ordered away and told they had no right to be in a "white" car park. Anecdotes of this kind, and much more unpleasant ones involving violence, can be collected every day as examples of white inhumanity to non-whites, or non-white inhumanity to whites, as the case may be; but it seems much more important to notice the profuse evidence of inter-racial acts of humanity than to collect atrocity stories.

THERE is evidence that the industrial revolution is doing good where white employers are intelligent enough to realise that there are no probable limits to the loyalty of Africans who are justly treated. How can people newly emancipated from the ancient systems of tribalism easily fend for themselves in a world where they find themselves almost totally lost? If they wish to work and live in a community where they have a useful function and a recognised status, where they are not

separated from their wives and children, and where a benevolent paternal interest is taken in them by their superiors, are they so different from the rest of the world? Exactly who is ready for egalitarianism?

IT IS unfitting, no doubt, to speak anything but seriously of national shrines; they are so involved with death, with history, with memory, with conscience: but it is permissible to take exception to them on æsthetic grounds. One's first sight of the Voortrekker Monument, on a hilltop near Pretoria, is disconcerting. It looks like a gigantic electric toaster in stone, or a wireless set of the early 1930's. And in view of the commanding site and important intentions of the monument, it is unfortunate to catch one's first sight of it over the roof of an ignoble refreshment-hut beneath it, with a large advertisement for a well-known soft drink.

Opinions may vary about the merits of the monument as architecture, but visually—and politically—it is anything but insignificant. It does commemorate real heroism, and to be a descendant of the Voortrekkers who pushed out into the unknown and faced great difficulties, dangers, and deprivations for the sake of what they regarded as freedom is to be justifiably proud. But with their great physical and moral vigour and their intellectual potentialities the Voortrekkers brought a great load of ignorance, isolationism, fundamentalism, rigid principles, a feeling of persecution, and above all what Laurens van der Post has so clearly defined in *The Dark Eye in Africa* as "the fanatical myth of a God-chosen people."

The Voortrekker Monument is enclosed in a circular simulacrum of a laager, one of those rings of covered wagons which were formed by the trekkers for defensive purposes. Unpleasantly and uniformly designed, the wagons are embellished with realistic details in low relief. There is something obsessive and hallucinatory about this ring, and something all too symbolically defensive. The monument is approached by steps and the

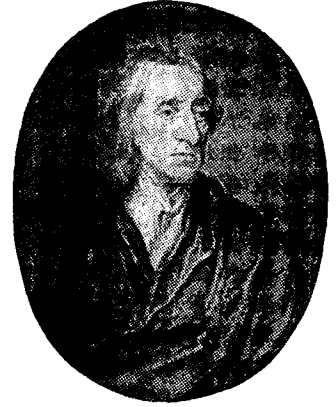
visitor is confronted by a bronze group of a grim Voortrekker woman, her face hidden by the characteristic hooded sun-bonnet and her arms protectively round her young. It is a serious work, but the would-be heroic figures in stone at the outside corners of the monument remind one, as one can easily be reminded in European or American capital cities, that patriotism is the last refuge of a sculptor.

The interior of the monument has an unexpected spaciousness, and marble has been well used on floor and walls, but there is something uncomfortably Germanic about its very austerity; about such details as the hole in the roof which is said to admit the rays of the sun at some moment of historical significance; and about the chronicle of Voortrekker doings shown in relief round the inside in the stiff, rather Sovietish convention of "social realism," complete with atrocity stories. Again and again recurs the image of the ring of wagons with the few heroic defenders within and the savage hordes pressing in upon them from outside.

The whole Denkmal is an embodiment, a consecration, of the Afrikaners' most potent national myth, legend, tradition, or symbol—that of encirclement. However soundly based in painful historical experience (the Africans did attack the trekkers and kill many in open fight or by treachery; the British did invade and attack them in the territory they had settled), the myth is unfortunate. It fosters and perpetuates a persecution mania. There are still Afrikaners whose view of the African is hardly different from that of the desperate, beleaguered Voortrekker fighting for the lives of his children against the sea of African anger surging all round the laager; and there are still Afrikaners who rail against "British Imperialists," whose hot breath they seem to feel on the backs of their necks, although these monsters are virtually extinct. In short, it is a monument that does nothing towards reconciling racial differences in South Africa. Its aim is to glorify them.

# Men and Ideas

## Maurice Cranston: JOHN LOCKE



LOCKE was not quite what he appeared to be. The portraits by Greenhill, Kneller, and Verelst all depict a face not only handsome but romantic, fastidious, patrician; the face of a connoisseur. Locke was many other things — economist, diplomatist, theologian, traveller, scientist, physician, pedagogue, philosopher—but he was never a man of artistic and literary taste. Hume was said to have looked like “a turtle-eating alderman instead of a refined philosopher”; Locke, who had the looks of a “refined philosopher”, wrote like a water-drinking opposition councillor, his style ungainly, his idioms commercial, his humour laboured, his interests embarrassingly practical. “What is the *use*,” he asked, “of poetry?”

His published writings lack, besides grace, the philosopher’s prime virtue of consistency. Some of the important points he makes in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* are refuted by what he says elsewhere in that same book. Locke is not exceptional among philosophers in being boring; the problem in his case is to see how one so uninspired and inconclusive can have also been so great.

There are critics who say that Locke was not great, not even a philosopher, but such are usually people who think that only metaphysicians are philosophers; and Locke was assuredly no Leibniz or Spinoza, he offered no all-embracing system to explain the nature of the universe. On the contrary, he tried to show that the human understanding is so limited that comprehensive knowledge of the universe is beyond men’s powers to reach. Locke did not give the answers; his achievement lay in setting out the problems, in suggesting, as no one had ever done before, what questions philosophers should ask and how philosophers should ask them.

Two powerful streams in 17th century thought, the semi-sceptical rational theorising of Descartes and the *ad hoc* scientific experimenting of Bacon and Boyle and the Royal Society, came together in Locke. Their union was not perfect, because the streams were so different, but his mind was the meeting point, a point which marked a new beginning, not only in philosophy, but in the way in which men thought about the world. Locke, one might almost say, had the first modern mind. Descartes, though more original than Locke, was still in many ways a medieval thinker, his philosophy was still subject to theology; even Gassendi, who anticipated much of Locke, did not quite leap free. Locke made the break; he separated philosophy from theology and set the proper study of philosophers within the boundaries of man’s experience: “Our portion lies only here in this little spot of earth, where we and all our concerns are shut up.”

Yet Locke was not a sceptic, and in his capacity as theologian he had thoughts of his own about God to expound. He quarrelled with prelates and the orthodox, he maintained that a Christian need believe no more than the single proposition “that Christ is the Messiah,” but to that bare minimum of doctrine he held with the deepest assurance. The New Testament was the basis, was indeed the sum of Locke’s moral teaching, and his political theory is hardly intelligible unless it is seen as a Christian’s theory. His whole temperament was, like Newton’s, a religious one.

LOCKE was a man of middle-class birth. His grandfather, Nicholas Locke, was a clothier of Pensford, Somerset; his father was

a less prosperous lawyer and clerk to the county magistrates. His mother came from a family of tanners at Wrington, also in Somerset, and Locke was born in that village on August 29th, 1632. His father was then twenty-six years old, his mother thirty-five; Locke was their first child. He was baptised by Samuel Crook, the leading intellectual Puritan of the diocese, and brought up in an atmosphere of austerity and discipline. The Civil War broke out when Locke was ten, and his father was mounted as a captain of Parliamentary Horse by Alexander Popham, a wealthy magistrate turned colonel. Apart from demolishing some Popish images in Wells Cathedral, the two officers saw little action, but a grateful Alexander Popham became the patron of his captain's eldest son, and when, a few years later, Westminster School was taken over by Parliament, the colonel found a place there for his protégé.

At Westminster, the boy came under the Royalist influence of Richard Busby, whom the Parliamentary governors had imprudently allowed to remain Master of the school, and when Locke left in 1652 to become an undergraduate of Christ Church, he was well prepared to react against the rule of the Puritan Saints which then prevailed at Oxford. By 1659 Locke was a right-wing monarchist; by 1661 his political views were very close to those of Hobbes.

Locke's principal biographer, H. R. Fox Bourne, who is generally reliable although he had no access to the large collection of Locke papers which Lord Lovelace sold to the Bodleian Library in 1948, spread abroad the idea that Locke was a life-long liberal. Finding liberal sentiments expressed in a manuscript entitled "Reflections on the Roman Commonwealth" and dated 1661, Fox Bourne concluded that Locke "had already arrived at conclusions in political science from which he never greatly swerved." In fact, Locke did not write the "Reflections on the Roman Commonwealth." The real author was a man named Walter Moyle. Locke *did* write on politics in 1661, but the sentiments he expressed were by no means liberal ones.

Locke in 1661 was a newly elected Christ Church don, and one of his political papers was written as an answer to a pamphlet by another Student of the House—*The Great Question Concerning Things Indifferent in Religious Worship*, by Edward Bagshawe.

Bagshawe argued that where the commands of God were not specific, the state should leave men free to worship as they pleased. His pamphlet was a plea for toleration. Locke's reply was a polemic against toleration. He maintained that the civil ruler "must necessarily have an absolute and arbitrary power over all the indifferent actions of his people." His argument was based on the proposition that men were born by God's design "subject to the will and pleasure of another," namely to the will and pleasure of their civil ruler.

In a preface to this pamphlet against Bagshawe, Locke said that "there is no one who can have a greater respect and veneration for authority than I." He recalled that he had been born in "a storm," a political storm which had "lasted almost hitherto," and he confessed that the calm which the Restoration of Charles II had brought with it was so welcome to him that he felt obliged in duty and in gratitude to encourage "obedience."

The influence of Hobbes, which was considerable throughout Locke's life, though Locke never admitted it, was at this period most pronounced. By way of an illustration, and also to show how Locke could reproduce Hobbes's ideas without achieving any corresponding excellence of literary style, I shall quote two paragraphs on the evils of life without government. The first, a well-known passage, is from Hobbes's *Leviathan*:

In such a condition there is no place for industry because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture of the earth, no navigation, nor use of commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society, and what is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

The second is from Locke's reply to Bagshawe:

[There is] no peace, no security, no employment, enmity with all men and safe possession of nothing, and those stinging swarms of misery which attend anarchy and rebellion.

Locke's pamphlet was intended for publication, but it was not published; it has never

yet been published. Other controversialists went more swiftly into print and achieved Locke's object. Bagshawe was expelled from his Studentship of Christ Church, and the Anglican majority in Parliament firmly resisted all pleas for religious toleration. A few years later Bagshawe died on bail from Newgate Prison. By that time, however, Locke had ceased to be his adversary; but had begun instead to think as Bagshawe thought.

IN THE summer of 1666, Locke met and made friends with Anthony Ashley Cooper, then Lord Ashley, later first Earl of Shaftesbury. "Shaftesbury" for simplicity's sake I shall call him here. He was not yet the leader of a party, but he was already the outstanding politician of the Left, the most forceful champion of religious toleration. Shaftesbury opposed the Corporation Bill, the Bill of Uniformity, the Five Mile Bill, and every other measure designed to curb the freedom of Nonconformists. He had thus been a spokesman for liberty when Locke still aspired to uphold obedience, but if at the time of their first meeting, Locke had not already come over to Shaftesbury's side, Shaftesbury must soon have pulled him across the last few hurdles.

A year later, at the age of thirty-four, he went to live at Shaftesbury's house in London. His Oxford career had not been a particularly distinguished one. He had been a temporary lecturer and a censor at Christ Church, he had made friends with Robert Boyle and helped him by collecting scientific data, and he had studied medicine; but he had done no important laboratory work and he had failed to get a medical degree. Even so, it was as a domestic physician that Locke entered Shaftesbury's household, and he soon proved himself an able one. He saved his patron's life, as Shaftesbury believed, when it was threatened by a suppurating cyst of the liver. Afterwards Shaftesbury decided that Locke was far too great a genius to be spending his time on medicine alone, and work of other kinds was found for him.

It was under Shaftesbury's patronage that Locke discovered his own true gifts. First he became a philosopher. At Oxford he had been as bored and dissatisfied as Hobbes had been with the medieval Aristotelian philosophy which was taught there. Reading Des-

cartes first opened Locke's eyes to the "new philosophy"; and discussions with Shaftesbury and other London friends led him to write, in his fourth year under Shaftesbury's roof, the earliest drafts of his masterpiece, the *Human Understanding*. In London also Locke met Thomas Sydenham, the great physician, who introduced him to the new clinical method he had learned in Montpellier. Shaftesbury himself introduced Locke to the study of economics and gave him his earliest experience of political administration.

Shaftesbury, little, ugly, and vain, has a bad name in the history books. But he was no fool. He was interested, with Locke, in philosophy and in science, and he did much to defend and enlarge the liberties of Englishmen. Admittedly his concern for religious toleration was not prompted by Christian forbearance and compassion. He advocated religious freedom because he believed that religious persecution divided a nation which would be stronger and richer if it were united. Shaftesbury was self-consciously the nationalist and the capitalist. He saw more clearly than most of his contemporaries that colonial expansion and international trade might bring at the same time great fortunes to men like himself and great power to the country as a whole.

WHEN Shaftesbury pleaded for religious toleration he wished to have it primarily on behalf of Protestant dissenters. Charles II, who favoured religious toleration primarily for the sake of Catholic recusants, was for some time in agreement with him against the intolerant Anglican majority. This was the position in the earliest years of Locke's connection with Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury was then anti-Dutch. He had studied Holland closely, and his kind of liberal imperialism was largely based on the Dutch model. He saw Holland as England's greatest rival in trade and therefore her greatest potential enemy. Later Shaftesbury came to regard France, not Holland, in this light, and he altered his policy accordingly. As Charles II was pro-French this change put Shaftesbury into opposition, but it also gave him a principle besides trade and toleration on which to take his public stand. That principle was the Protestant religion. France was Catholic, and everything Catholic served the interests of France; France was England's

natural enemy, therefore everything Catholic was inimical to England's interests. The case was easily argued, though indeed it hardly needed to be argued. The very name of "Popery" was enough to agitate the public.

Shaftesbury, however, liked to argue; he liked to be able to express his ideas in theoretical terms; and as his physician was also a philosopher, he invited Locke to reflect on the general principles involved in these matters of political expediency. Was it illogical to stand both for religious toleration and for the suppression of Catholics? Locke came to the conclusion that it was not. Catholics were not just religious dissenters, they were a body of men who acknowledged allegiance to a foreign potentate, the Pope, and who were therefore allied through Rome with the Pope's true friends, the French. No country, Locke believed, could tolerate within it people who were potentially disloyal. It was not a question of religious liberty, but of the security of the realm, and the defence of the realm was the first duty of any government.

Locke stayed with Shaftesbury on and off until Shaftesbury's death in 1682. In those fifteen years Shaftesbury's Protestant zeal carried him to the point of organising a rebellion. Charles II refused to deny his Catholic brother, James, his legitimate right to succeed him to the throne. Shaftesbury persuaded Parliament to pass a measure designed to make James's succession illegal. When Charles thwarted this manoeuvre, Shaftesbury replied by calling on his friends to rise and exclude James in favour of a Protestant successor by force of arms. The Protestant successor he unwisely named was Charles's bastard, Monmouth. But Shaftesbury's supporters hesitated, and he himself withdrew to Holland, there, soon afterwards, to die.

THESE were the events which stand behind Locke's *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. The book was not published until eight years after Shaftesbury's death, by which time Englishmen had come round to Shaftesbury's way of thinking to the extent of expelling James II by force of arms and enthroning his Protestant nephew, William. Locke in the preface of the published version of his book said he hoped it would "help to justify the title of King William to rule us." But Locke had conceived the book, and

written most of it, when Charles II was still alive, and when the question of whether a nation had the right to rebel against its ruler was not a backward-looking moral problem but a forward-looking moral challenge.

Textbooks of political science, having said their piece about its being intended to justify William, usually go on to describe the *Civil Government* as if it were a critique of Hobbes, a philosophical book written in reply to the *Leviathan* and *De Cive*. In fact the *Civil Government* belongs to the literature of persuasion and the greater part of it was written in reply to Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*.

Filmer was not, as Hobbes was, a man of genius, but he was more important politically at the time because his was the official Tory point of view. Hobbes, a disciple in many ways of Machiavelli, recommended obedience on purely selfish and prudential grounds. Filmer was high-minded and religious. The authority of hereditary monarchs, including the Stuart Kings, derived, he said, from God, and he set out to prove this claim by reference to the Bible. People listened to Filmer because he said what they wanted to hear. And it was because Filmer was influential that Locke chose to answer him.

Locke was not alone in replying to Filmer. In 1681 there was published in London a book entitled *Patriarcha non Monarcha*. The author was James Tyrrell, one of Locke's closest and oldest friends. There is no reference to *Patriarcha non Monarcha* in the *Civil Government*, but there is a striking similarity of argument. Appearing as it did in the reign of Charles II, *Patriarcha non Monarcha* was thoughtfully embellished with a portrait of that king and in the preface there was a note to the effect that the doctrine of absolute sovereignty was something utterly alien to Englishmen. Otherwise the main lines of Tyrrell's argument was almost the same as Locke's in the first of his two treatises on *Civil Government*.

Both Locke and Tyrrell argued that the authority of a father over his children was not absolute, but subject to Natural Law, so that if the authority of kings over their subjects were derived from the authority of fathers over their children it would not be absolute. Then they both said, with Hobbes, that the authority of kings over their subjects

could *not* be derived from the authority of fathers over their children because the relationship of a father to his children was a natural one, which the relationship of a king to his subjects was not. But whereas Tyrrell forbore to elicit the principle that subjects had therefore a right to resist kings who disregarded Natural Law, Locke pressed home this conclusion with particular force; and whereas Tyrrell had little to say about the contract theory of the origin of society, Locke dealt with it at length.

THE social contract Locke expounded was something very different from that of Hobbes. Locke believed that the social contract had actually taken place. He believed it was a fact of history that men had once lived in a state of natural anarchy and had then banded together to form political societies. For Hobbes the social contract was only an analytic device, an attempt, as Richard Peters has shown, to apply the method of Galileo to civil society "to reveal the basic principles presupposed by its existence."

Locke abandoned the Hobbesian view of the horrors of natural anarchy because he abandoned the Hobbesian view of human nature. Locke in his maturity took a Christian view instead, albeit a Christian view purged of the idea of original sin. Man, according to Locke, was subject, even in a state of nature, to the rule of Natural Law, which was ultimately God's law made known to men through the voice of reason. This is a perplexing explanation. Hobbes's analysis has the advantages of simplicity: either you are ruled or you are not ruled, either you have liberty or you have obedience, either you have chaos and danger or you have security and fetters. Neither condition is ideal, Hobbes realised, but even the worst government is better than no government at all. The Lockian analysis is more complicated. For Locke believed that men *could* be both ruled and free. Subject in a state of nature to the rule of Natural Law, men were also endowed with Natural Rights—notably the rights to life, liberty, and property—and these rights were retained when men formed political societies. Instead of all *surrendering* equally their liberty to a sovereign as Hobbes suggested, men had in forming political societies merely, according to Locke, *entrusted* power to a

sovereign. In return for the advantages of settled justice and mutual security, men had agreed to obey their rulers, but only on condition that their Natural Rights were respected by their rulers. Natural Rights, being rooted in Natural Law, were rooted in something higher than the edicts of princes, they were rooted in the edicts of God.

Locke's "right to rebellion"—the right of men to overthrow a ruler who failed to respect the Natural Rights of his subjects—thus derived not only from the idea of the social contract but from the supremacy of God's law to man-made law. People who might have understood, or, understanding, might not have been impressed by the social contract theory, could both appreciate and respond to the principle that God's law is higher than the law of earthly rulers.

LOCKE met Filmer on Filmer's ground. He championed the rights of men against the rights of kings, and appealed as Filmer did, to the Almighty. Hobbes, for all his quotations from the Bible, was on different ground: the ground of *Realpolitik*, psychology and geometrical method. But the religion Locke appealed to was, in its way, as "unmedieval" as Hobbes's secularism. It was not the astringent faith of the Church or of Calvin, but a Christianity both watered down and sweetened, the same sort of Tennysonian religion which later was known as "Modernism."

Had "Modernist" been a 17th century word, Locke might have been pleased to be called one. The word he would not tolerate was "Socinian." He *was* a Socinian, in that his religious opinions were indistinguishable from Socinian opinions, but he protested vigorously that he was not one. When a critic of his, a fighting pamphleteer named Edwards, declared that all Socinians were atheists and that Locke was a Socinian, Locke did not come out against the first of these two propositions, which was false and could be shown to be false, but against the second, and he made very heavy weather of denying what was true. He even protested that he had never read the leading Socinian authors, though his notebooks contain excerpts he had already copied from their writings. I think Locke denied his acquaintance with Socinian books from the same motive which prompted him to deny his ac-

quaintance with Hobbes's books. "Socinian" and "Hobbist" were both pejorative words, both bad names, and Locke in his later years was extraordinarily anxious to avoid the slightest hint of disgrace.

He was never a candid man. He had an almost Gothic fondness of mystery for the sake of mystery: he used all kinds of little cyphers, he modified a shorthand system for the purposes of concealment, he cut signatures from letters he preserved, and on at least one occasion he employed invisible ink. He guarded his anonymity as an author with elaborate care. He kept secrets from people who were supposed to be his closest friends. "Do not tell Mr. Oakley" is an injunction which occurs more than once in Locke's letters to Edward Clarke. "Mr. Oakley" was James Tyrrell. Some of this secrecy was plain good sense, dating from the time when Locke was a political fugitive. Some of it served to add a much-needed touch of romance to Locke's relations with his women friends, a formidable lot of dons' blue-stocking daughters. But because Locke was sometimes secretive for a good reason and sometimes neurotically secretive and sometimes secretive for fun it is difficult to make out exactly what he was doing at certain times of his life.

THROUGHOUT the years when Shaftesbury's house was his London home, Locke retained his Studentship of Christ Church, though he seldom spent as much as a full term in Oxford. His comings and goings were the subject of speculation. In 1675 he was thought to be after a place as a medical don, but he went to France for three and a half years instead. In 1682, after Shaftesbury's disappearance, Locke seemed once more about to settle down in Oxford, and would probably have done so had not the alleged conspiracy of Shaftesbury's Whig successors to kidnap Charles II and his brother at Rye House precipitated such a feverish witch-hunt that Locke felt it would be unsafe to remain in England. He fled, as Shaftesbury had done, to Amsterdam.

In 1684 Locke was expelled in absence from his Studentship of Christ Church by the King's express command. The following summer, after James's succession to the throne, came Monmouth's abortive rebellion in the West of England, and Locke was named by the English government as one of

Monmouth's agents in Holland. Locke went into hiding as "Dr. van der Linden," but a few months later his name was removed from the list of wanted men, and he emerged from hiding, though he did not return to England.

Locke's friends in Holland included some of William's English courtiers, but Locke himself was seldom at The Hague. When William and his supporters sailed in 1688 to invade the English coast, Locke complained of ill-health and stayed in Rotterdam. His Swiss friend Jean le Clerc called him "*plutôt timide que courageux*," but the remark was hardly just, for Locke, at the age of fifty-six could reasonably feel that he had his share of danger. He returned to London quietly in 1689 in the company of Princess Mary.

Jean le Clerc's words have been seized upon by Locke's biographers because they can be used to support the theory that Locke had never anything to do with such hazardous activities as revolutionary plots. Their story is that Locke was Shaftesbury's friend and aide while Shaftesbury's actions were constitutional, but not at other times. While Shaftesbury was preparing a rebellion, Locke, we are invited to believe, was a remote and harmless Oxford don. Other dons were not of this opinion, and at least one in Christ Church believed that Locke had a hand in the Rye House plot, that he was working with Monmouth in Holland, and that he was the author of seditious tracts which had been smuggled into England from Amsterdam. This may have been partly true. Shaftesbury, according to his grandson, had employed Locke "for his secretest negotiations," and Locke was certainly in close touch with some of the conspirators in Holland, but I do not myself believe that he wrote any of the smuggled pamphlets.

IN HOLLAND between 1683 and 1689, as in France between 1675 and 1679, Locke travelled about the country making notes of what he saw, but because he had no eye for beauty and no sense of history his notes make dismal reading. He would go to great trouble to visit some great cathedral or château, and then spend much of his time there working out the exact dimensions. He detested ceremonies and show, which he thought irrational and wasteful, and was

clearly pleased to find that one of the best Dutch universities had the most nondescript architecture. It proved "that knowledge depends not on the stateliness of buildings, etc."

"Knowledge" is the word which matters here. For Locke's philistinism was in no sense an aberration. Locke wanted to get away from the imagination, from the vague glamour of medieval things, from unthinking adherence to tradition, from enthusiasm, mysticism, and *gloire*; away from all private, visionary insights and down to the publicly verifiable, measurable, plain, demonstrable facts; and this desire was central to his whole mission as a philosopher and reformer. His antipathy to imaginative artists was coupled with contempt for ivory-tower scholars who "converse with but one sort of men and read but one sort of books," and thus

canton out to themselves a little goshen in the intellectual world where the light shines, and, as they conclude, day blesses them; but the rest of that vast *expansum* they give up to night and to darkness; and so avoid coming near it. They have a pretty traffic with known correspondents in some little creek; within that they confine themselves and are dexterous managers enough of the wares and products of that corner, but will not venture out into the great ocean of knowledge. . . .

Venturing out into the great ocean of knowledge made Locke a polymath, but he was in no sense a smatterer. Admittedly his expertness was not equally marked in all the subjects he chose to study. Compared to Boyle and Newton, who were his friends, Locke was an amateurish scientist; his knowledge of the Scriptures was questionable; and although he was an original as well as an influential economist, he could not appreciate the subtlety of other theorists in that field. What was important in Locke's case, however, was not his versatility itself, but that each department of knowledge was related in his mind to all the others.

During his exile in Holland he wrote, from drafts he had made in 1671, his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, his first *Letter for Toleration*, and his *Thoughts on Education* (or, more accurately, the letters which were afterwards published under this title), and he may have done some work on his *Civil Government*. The *Letter for Toleration* was published in Locke's original Latin

at Gouda in 1689, and an English translation made by the Socinian William Popple—made, Locke afterwards said, "without my privity"—was published in London a few months later. The *Human Understanding* and the *Civil Government* were also brought out by different London booksellers in the winter of 1689–90. Only the *Human Understanding* bore Locke's name, but its success was so great that it made its author famous throughout Europe even in his lifetime.

LOCKE did not despise the life of an *L'homme d'esprit* in London society, but the dirty air of the city made him ill. He had had asthma for many years, and he now began to think he had phthisis. He decided to accept a country retreat in Essex which was offered him by Damaris Masham, the daughter of Ralph Cudworth and wife of Sir Francis Masham, M.P. Lady Masham and Locke had once exchanged love letters, and she was still very willing to lavish her care on him. Locke remained a boarder in the Masham household until his death in 1704, though acting on the precept that an intellectual ought not to live in "a little goshen," he went frequently to London. In 1696 his friend Sir John Somers, the Whig leader and then virtual Prime Minister, gave him the opportunity to become a Commissioner on the new Board of Trade, and although he had refused several other posts, and was in poorer health than he had ever been, Locke accepted, installed William Popple as Secretary, and for the next few years dominated everything the Board of Trade did. Peter Laslett has suggested that the Board was originally Locke's idea.

One of the Board's duties was to investigate unemployment and Poor Law. The plan Locke drew up for reform in these fields is a revealing document. It shows he regarded poverty not as a misfortune but as a sign of moral failure. Unemployment, Locke wrote, was due to "the relaxation of discipline and the corruption of manners" and the first step "towards setting the poor on work" should be the closing of "unnecessary alehouses." Next, he recommended that any man found begging should, if under fifty, be empressed for three years' naval service, or, if over fifty, be sent to prison for three years' hard labour. Women found begging, he suggested, might have lighter sentences, but girls as well as

boys under fourteen should be "soundly whipped."

Locke also proposed methods for "taking away the pretence" that there was no work for the idle to do. First, they should be put to work with private employers for less than the usual rate of pay, under threat of empressment. Secondly, pauper-schools should be set up in every parish to enable both mothers and children to work productively. As an economical diet for the children, Locke recommended bread, supplemented in cold weather with "a little water gruel; for the same fire that warms the room may be made use of to boil a pot of it." By this means, "computing all the earnings of a child from three to fourteen years of age, the nourishment and teaching of such a child during that whole time will cost the parish nothing" instead of the fifty or sixty pounds a year each pauper child was then costing the parish under the existing Poor Law. Locke added:

Another advantage also of bringing children thus to a working school is that by this means they may be obliged to come constantly to church every Sunday . . . whereby they may be brought into some sense of religion. . . .

Locke's 17th century contemporaries rejected the scheme, but something very like it was adopted in the 19th century. H. R. Fox Bourne, who was a Victorian and a Quaker, thought it "excellent" and "philanthropic." Locke had a personality in several ways more Victorian than Stuart. Doubtless also he was one of Freud's "anal types." Not only his parsimoniousness, but his very way of writing would suggest this to the psychoanalyst: on the one hand there are such remarks as "it is very seldom that anyone discovers mines of gold or silver in Parnassus" (Locke's reason for discouraging parents from developing artistic talents in their children); on the other hand, there are such remarks as his description of himself as one employed in "removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge." More obvious are Locke's references in published and unpublished writings to his own costiveness. The humourless author who suggested a year or two ago that Berkeley's philosophy could be explained in terms of a repressed coprophilia in *faeces* might easily say the same of Locke. Indeed this theory seems to have been that of one of Locke's contemporaries,

his bitter critic, Edwards, who wrote (apropos of Locke's *Thoughts on Education*):

I might here harmlessly divert the reader with . . . Mr. Locke's teaching children how to evacuate dextrously, which latter succeeds only when the Party is present, it being promoted by his Vespasian looks. He hath spent some time, he saith, in the study of physic, and especially of the guts, which he very feelingly and learnedly discourses of, as if they were that part of the body which he most minds. . . . Dirt and ordure and dunghills are the frequent embellishments of his style.

Evidently, if Locke was a very early Victorian, Edwards was an even more remarkably early Freudian. But I have quoted Locke's views on poverty not in order to encourage such psychoanalytic speculations, but to show how remote he was from Rousseau, how completely untouched by that belief in human equality which Rousseau made the dominant sentiment of the Left.

**I**N ONE of his books on monetary theory, Locke pointed out that "the labourers' share" of the national wealth "being seldom more than a bare subsistence, never allows that body of men time or opportunity to raise their thoughts above that," or even to assert their interests against the rich unless "some common and great distress, uniting them in some universal ferment, makes them forget respect. . . ." Locke did not mean with these words to suggest that labourers ought to have more than a bare subsistence, but rather that governments should ward off any "common and great distress" which might make labourers forget the respect they owed their superiors.

Precisely because they had not more than a bare subsistence, working men were excluded from the full responsibilities and privileges of political society. For, as Locke said more than once, "the great and chief end . . . of men's uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under governments is the preservation of their property." And although Locke said he used the word "property" to mean "that property which men have in their persons as well as their goods," he often also used the word in its more limited and familiar sense. The labourer's only "goods" was his capacity to work, and the sale of that to an employer left him with nothing. If the labourer had there-

fore little material interest in the common-wealth, neither had he much rationality to contribute to it. "The greatest part of mankind have not the leisure for learning and logic."

Locke's writings on the rationality of men are decidedly ambiguous if not contradictory. I think it is not unfair to say that he believed in the rationality of all men when it suited him and not otherwise. When he was writing as a champion of the right of rebellion, as a revolutionary pamphleteer, Locke emphasised the rationality of men as he emphasised their natural rights. In this context he had perforce to minimise the disadvantages of natural anarchy and in doing so he came very near to a "Garden of Eden" picture of pre-political human history. Locke consulted the reports of travellers who had visited remote parts of the globe, to see what life was like among the pre-political savages, and the reports which came from North America and the Pacific islands tended to confirm his theory that life in a condition of natural anarchy was in many ways an agreeable one—agreeable because men were naturally rational and naturally quite good. To this extent Locke *did* have something in common with Rousseau: they were both believers—Locke vaguely and Rousseau intensely—in the Noble Savage.

But Locke was not carried as Rousseau was from the idea of the Noble Savage to the idea of Democracy. From the thought that all men were rational in a state of nature he never for one moment passed to the thought that all men in a political society were equally rational. The moment Locke stopped thinking about Natural Laws and thought about practical politics, he stopped thinking about men's equality and their common rationality. Men were so obviously *not* equal. Some were much more intelligent than others, and some were much better than others. The idea of *social* equality at no time entered Locke's head.

When William Penn told him about the social services he wished to introduce in Pennsylvania, Locke protested that such innovations would be inimical to the liberty of subjects. To sacrifice liberty for the sake of philanthropy seemed to Locke mistaken; the object might be good but the price was too high. If anyone had suggested sacrificing

liberty for the sake of equality, Locke would have thought the sacrifice disastrous and the object foolish.

IN THE preface to the English edition of the first *Letter for Toleration* is a sentence which reads: "Absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty is the thing we stand in need of." Many people have supposed these words to be Locke's, and Lord King used them as an epigraph for his biography of the philosopher, but in fact the words were written by William Popple, the translator of the *Letter*.

Locke did *not* believe in absolute liberty, any more than he believed in absolute knowledge. Locke wanted as much liberty as possible and he wanted as much knowledge as possible; and he thought the way to achieve as much as possible of each was to face the fact that both were limited and then to find out what the limitations were. The limits of knowledge, he thought, were set by the limits of men's cognitive apparatus; the senses gave men data (or "ideas") of the universe, but men had no means of comparing the data with the universe itself. Once men recognised that certain information could be had only in one or two fields, they could go on to acquire a great deal of probable information in other fields. Hence the seeming paradox of Locke's attempt in his *Human Understanding* to show how much men can know by demonstrating how little they can know.

Locke's political writings, on which I have concentrated in this article, are less elaborately argued than his *Human Understanding*, but his technique is much the same. By demonstrating the liberty that men cannot have, Locke shows the liberty that men can have. The limits of liberty are set by the nature of political societies as such, by the necessity of protecting the life, property, and freedom of each from invasion by any other, and protecting the safety of all from common enemies. Once those limitations are understood, no other limitations need be borne, indeed no other limitations *should* be borne. Locke set men on the road to the greatest possible liberty by the method he used to set them on the road to the greatest possible knowledge—by teaching them the impossibility of the absolute.

## Dwight Macdonald / REFLECTIONS

GULLIVERISH feeling of an American in London; buildings four to eight storeys instead of New York's ten to eighty; nice to stroll about like a man in this man-scale landscape instead of hurrying between multi-windowed cliffs like an ant trapped at the bottom of the Grand Canyon; sky larger, nearer, lovelier than in New York. Automobiles small, toy freight-cars (goods trucks)—three or four would fit inside one of ours; Sunday paper can be lifted easily in one hand. Everything is retail—eggs and cigarettes are sold singly, milk in pints (imperial pints but still more pintish than quartish); flats rent by the week rather than month; coal delivered in canvas sacks carried on men's backs instead of being dumped from trucks (lorries) down chute-holes in pavement; typing paper sold by the sheet, 1s. 1d. for 24; phone book is retail (four volumes), likewise weather (changes every 30 minutes); great amount of individual barter, no full-page department store ads in papers; instead, labyrinthine classified ad section of *The Times*, also weeklies—*Dalton's*, *London Weekly Advertiser*, *Exchange & Mart*—consisting almost entirely of classified ads. British claustromania: pubs, snack bars, restaurants designed for pigmies with detachable legs; the vertical tea-shop, five tiny rooms on top of each other; the first thing an English pub-keeper does when he lays out his premises—assuming, perhaps wrongly, they ever have been in any way planned—is to cut up the already exiguous space into as many Private Bars, Public Bars, Saloon Bars, Family Entrances, and other subdivisions as possible, throwing in a few strategically-placed buttresses, partitions, and pillars, thus insuring each patron his cramped little nook jammed up against several other cramped little nooks, the whole arrangement ingeniously combining the disadvantages of both the public and the private and perhaps explaining why Englishmen prefer

to herd together at the bar, standing like horses in a corral. Rule, Lilliputania!

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Two reasons for Eisenhower's charisma for the American people and his non-charisma for me: (1) "Eisenhower is ordinary-like"—a Michigan gasoline-station attendant as quoted in *Time*. "So is Kefauver," he added, pointedly omitting Stevenson. (2) The reason he gave for not discussing Suez at a recent press conference—"I don't want to embarrass anyone."

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IRONICAL that the first big cultural export from post-Stalin Russia should have been the Bolshoi ballet. The Bolshoi is the quintessence of Stalinist culture because it is the luxury art-form, *par excellence*, of that old aristocracy with whom the *arriviste* bureaucrats want snobbishly to identify themselves; because its emphasis on story-telling and realistic décor fits in with the crusade against "formalism"; and because it preserves, in Byzantine stagnation, a century-old national tradition which, around 1910, Fokine and Diaghilev overthrew to found the modern, or Western, style of classical ballet. The great experimenters of the twenties—Eisenstein and Pudovkin in cinema, Meyerhold and Tairov in theatre, Malievitch, Chagall, Kandinsky, Gabo, Pevsner in the fine arts—these were extirpated in the first years of Stalin's reign and nothing grew in their place. Walking through the Soviet pavilion at the Venice Biennale was to ride the time-machine back to the palmy and innocent days of academicism; a show of Russian art coming to London will feature—ikons. So what was there, really, to export except the Bolshoi?

THE most discussed play in London has been John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. It was so discussable that on Monday nights the audience was invited to remain in their seats after

the final curtain and talk it over with the cast. I was lucky enough to see it on a Monday. Most of the speakers seemed to feel, as I did, that the play had been more discussable than enjoyable. A large earnest young man in a turtleneck sweater said he hoped no one thought the play spoke for the younger generation. A short red-faced young man said it was a crime for Jimmy to waste all that valuable state-financed education on running a sweet shop. A white-haired gentleman said he was from Australia and would return with a sense he had been given a real insight into the British youth problem. A middle-aged Scotsman agreed about the insight, adding, "I thank God I don't belong to that crowd of lazy, promiscuous parasites!" (In general, the over-forty seemed most impressed with the play as a social document.) A nice old lady said Jimmy "might be the young Keats or Shelley." A small, spectacled woman said she was of the working-class and had been educated at a red-brick university and the play was a failure because it didn't provide any solution for the problems it raised. A sleek woman with long dangling ear-rings asked the actor who played Jimmy if he really thought a couple could stay together four years if they quarrelled like that. He said yes. The session was abruptly ended by the sudden appearance on stage of a seedy, coatless young man, very drunk, who seemed not to have seen the play or to have anything coherent to say and who resisted the polite efforts of the actors to get him to sit down and the elderly doorkeeper to eject him. This irruption of actual British youth—though of a more primitive type even than Jimmy and his friends—presented a problem nobody could solve, and the meeting broke up in some confusion.

My own view of the play, which I was getting up courage to present when the drunk cut things short, is that the players are luckier than the audience because, while both have to listen to Jimmy's copious monologues, the former at least know they have a line or two coming, while the paying customers must suffer in silence. The play's fatal defect is that the author regards Jimmy not as a psychologically sick person, which he is, but as a sympathetic hero who has suffered some kind of social injustice, which he isn't and hasn't—unless one agrees with him that running a sweet shop is the British equivalent of being sentenced to the salt-mines. (A young intellectual who actually runs a sweet shop tells me it's a gold- rather than a salt-mine.) It is as if Shaw had presented Dubedat "straight," as the normative hero of *The Doctor's Dilemma*, or Dostoevsky had treated the protagonist of *Notes from Underground* as a tragic hero like Raskolnikov. Shaw and Dostoevsky keep such characters at arm's

length, viewing them with irony and humour, but Osborne is much too close to Jimmy, who is not, as he thinks, Stavrogin, but rather young Verhovensky. He would have us see him as a red-brick Prometheus, but Jimmy's actual behaviour is that of a self-pitying, bad-tempered mediocrity who lacks the strength and talent to live up to his aspirations and who takes it out on his wife. This will seem a brutal diagnosis in the atmosphere of tender concern for The Young and their Problems that is dominant in London now, but I think it an accurate one. And hasn't this solicitude been a little overdone? When I saw *Look Back in Anger* last summer at the Royal Court, it was alternating with Nigel Dennis' dramatisation of his novel, *Cards of Identity*. Mr. Osborne's play, discussable as it is, seemed to me in every way inferior to Mr. Dennis'—which, indeed, I thought the most witty and entertaining social satire I have seen on the stage since Shaw. Yet *Look Back in Anger*, which is about and by The Young, was running until recently, while *Cards of Identity*, which is neither, was withdrawn months ago. Elders of London, unite! You have nothing to lose at all.

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"WE cannot these days overlook the export value of the new stamps. There will probably be a big demand from collectors in America, Canada, and other 'hard currency' areas," said a BBC commentator recently, apropos the plan to issue special sets of stamps for Scotland, Wales, and five other parts of the British Isles. "These days"—ominous words! Not India, not Abadan, not Suez or Cyprus, but postage stamps may signalise Britain's imperial decline. Printing stamps for collectors is one of the classic ways small countries balance their miniscule budgets. The British section of stamp albums threatens to rival those consecrated to Monaco and Ecuador. "A shock to all serious philatelists," Mr. J. W. B. Ruffle, of Salisbury, has warned bluntly in a letter to *The Times*. "Let the Postmaster-General withdraw this suggestion at once before the country sinks to the lowest levels in the philatelic world."

Another straw in the same wind was the warning of Premier Chou En-lai, after the Hong Kong riots, that his government could not "permit such disorders on the doorsteps of China." Shades of Chinese Gordon! Such warnings used to run the other way, from West to East, and it was the British who imposed "law and order" on the Chinese, even if Lord Elgin had to burn down the Summer Palace to do it.

IT SEEMS odd that London, which showed New York the way to the cheap paper-back with Penguins in 1936, has yet to produce any

of those "quality paper-backs" that have lately appeared in the States. The genre was born in 1953 when Jason Epstein, a young executive at Doubleday, persuaded his firm to begin Anchor Books, a series that was to differ from then-existing paper-back lines in being longer, more expensive (65 cents to \$1.25), and entirely confined to "serious" or "highbrow" titles, mostly non-fiction. (The first six were typical: Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma*, Bedier's *Romance of Tristan and Iseult*, Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station*, Cassirer's *An Essay on Man*, Francis Fergusson's *The Idea of a Theatre*, and D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature*.) There are now a dozen such lines on the market, including Knopf's Vintage, Harcourt's Harvest, and Noonday's Meridian books. These differ from Penguin's non-fiction line in being mostly reprints of standard texts instead of specially-commissioned jobs. (I must say that, except for a few titles like Kitto's *The Greeks*, the Penguin non-fiction volumes seem to me hack jobs of academic popularisation; I would rather read Whitehead, Weber, Croce, or Malinowski themselves than some professorial "survey" of their ideas.)

The economics are interesting. It is not worth publishing a cheap paper-back (25 to 50 cents, depending on the length) unless it can sell at least 150,000, but a quality paper-back—they are now priced up to \$2, which is still cheap, a half or a third the original hard-cover price—can break even on as low as 10,000. According to an article by Hayden Carruth in *Perspectives USA*, No. 15, the average sale is 30,000, "which is six or seven times greater than the same title achieved in standard editions." Mr. Carruth estimates the difference in price is only half accounted for by savings in manufacture (the paper cover, which most people think is the chief economy, actually saves less than 20 cents per copy), and that the other half is made possible by the increased sale. That money can be made by selling more for less is, of course, something Henry Ford found out fifty years ago, even if American publishers have only just waked up to it. (British publishers are still sleeping quietly.) The real economic discovery symbolised by the quality paper-backs is that the mass market is divisible, that there are in fact a number of "minority mass-markets" that can be exploited. The post-war boom in classical record sales in the States is another example, as also the growth of a national "little" cinema circuit (really a renaissance, we had them also in 1926-36) which profitably shows foreign and "art" films to the same public that buys Anchor books and albums of chamber music. There are now even a few big "little" magazines in pocket-book form—*New World Writing*, the leading

one, has a circulation of over 100,000—which print much the same sort of *avant-garde* material as the little "little" magazines but reach a ten or twenty times larger audience. In short, the techniques of mass manufacture and distribution can be used to satisfy minority tastes as well as to produce comic books.

CIVIL liberties have been looking up in America. The remarkable post-war advance of the Negroes toward equal treatment—the Civil War is being won a century after it began—is continuing; the Supreme Court's decision against racial segregation in public education is slowly, but actually, being enforced in the South. Senator McCarthy has disappeared from the front pages, and hence from political significance, as abruptly as a pantomime devil drops through a trap-door; the speed of his collapse is, by the way, an index of the flimsiness of his "mass base." But one peculiar and disgraceful American institution still flourishes: the black-listing of radio, television, and cinema actors, writers, and directors for their Communist sympathies, real or alleged, past or present. The Fund for the Republic, a by-blow of the Ford Foundation that concerns itself with civil liberties, has published a two-volume *Report on Blacklisting* which tells the whole story, from the "Hollywood Ten" who lost their highly paid screen-writing jobs in 1947 because they wouldn't tell the Un-American Activities Committee whether they were Communists or not, down to such current phenomena as *Red Channels*, a directory of allegedly tainted radio and television people that has cut short many a career, and the one-man crusade of Laurence A. Johnson, a Syracuse, N.Y., grocery-store owner who has caused an incredible amount of grief to the great national networks.

*Report on Blacklisting* is a typical foundation-financed study—too much data, too little thought. Why do we Americans, so public-relations conscious, so skilled in mass entertainment, always flub assignments like this? Is it the relaxing effect of all those fat Ford \$\$\$? Or our research-barnacled academic tradition? Who will read these dropsical volumes, swollen with otiose and undigested information? Who *can* read them? However, a few interesting points about blacklisting emerge from the *Report*, or rather may be dragged out.

(1) Blacklisting is not a response to Communist infiltration. There is no evidence of a left slant being given to material any time, anywhere. Even the Hollywood Ten, who really *were* pro-Communist at the time they were fired (unlike the vast majority of blacklistees), didn't write scripts in any way different, politically,

from those produced by their more patriotic fellow-hacks.

(2) The people in radio and television, from the top executives on down, almost all condemn blacklisting and think the compilers of lists are either lunatics or profiteers. (A special survey by Dr. Marie Jahoda, a well-known sociologist, found that 100 per cent of top-level people who answered felt blacklisting did more harm than good and that 0 per cent of them thought the listers were sincere patriots.) They give in to the blacklisters because they are frightened. Big money plus big audiences means timidity. The bankers with millions invested in Hollywood, the great corporations that sponsor radio and television shows have so much to lose, and know so little about the mass audience, that half a dozen letters denouncing a performer can panic them. It is interesting that blacklisting has never taken hold in the Broadway theatre, where both capital and audiences are comparatively small.

(3) This kind of "anti-Communism" produces an ultra-Communist atmosphere. As in the U.S.S.R., it is not enough to change one's mind. To get off the list, one must confess, repent, and do it abjectly and in public. (One actor's agent advised him to "crawl a little.") Above all, one must give Names. A decent reluctance to tell on friends is the most common reason people refuse to "co-operate," the prerequisite to getting off the list. Also as in Russia, a mere denunciation, however ill-founded, is a very serious matter; writers and actors have been driven out of their profession because of a few crackpot letters (as in the Jean Muir case).

(4) Blacklisting has become, in the sociologists' useful jargon, institutionalised. Someone, after all, has to make the decision to hire or not, and there must be some criteria for making it. So there have arisen kangaroo courts of appeal, run by experts in the dismal science of separating the red sheep from the innocent goats, each with its own prescribed ritual of "clearance." It is, of course, all extra-legal—indeed, pre-legal; the anthropologist can here study the first developments of law and order out of primeval chaos. In another generation, Hollywood and Madison Avenue may have evolved up to the Cro-Magnon period.

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ONE curious aspect of blacklisting calls for another Gogol, a modern anatomist of the strange shapes humanity takes on under the pressure of a despotism that is at once absurd and inescapable. When a radio or television writer is blacklisted, he sometimes continues to market his wares by getting a "front" to sign his scripts, attend studio conferences, and otherwise masquerade as the author. These "fronts," shadowy ghosts of ghost writers, are usually

writers themselves, to make it more plausible. Since they are always less successful than the blacklistees they front for, various "ego problems" arise. Their families and friends assume they are making a great deal of money and wonder why they are so niggardly about spending it. The "front" himself may become so used to acting like a highly talented writer that he begins to resent the real writer. If the show is successful, it puts all sorts of strains on the arrangement. Very often the "front" demands a bigger cut of the pay-check, on the grounds he is now a big-name author. One "front" resigned because he could not cope with the emotional turmoil set up by a phone call from his father: "I saw your show last night, and I'm glad to see you're finally becoming a writer after all these years of trying!" Another won such fame with his unwriting that he was hired as a script editor, whereupon he turned down the work of his former employer on the grounds he was on the blacklist. A third, greedy for bigger commissions, began to accept so much work on such impossibly short deadlines that the frantic blacklistee had to fire him. A fourth was trapped in a painful dilemma when a movie company, impressed by his nonscripts, offered him a large salary to come out to Hollywood and write for them. A fifth met disaster in a peculiar, though entirely logical, way when he became so well known as a result of the brilliant scripts he marketed under his name that he was himself investigated and put on the blacklist. It is not recorded whether he then hired a front for his own front.

NOW that the Russians are beginning again to attend international scholarly meetings, special problems arise because the Soviet delegations have an official status, and so tend to stick to a dogged repetition of the authorised Marxist platitudes. Also, as representatives of the State, they must react with official virulence and verbosity to criticisms of their country's institutions. Academic bodies don't like rows, and so this super-sensitivity of Soviet scholars can lead to self-censoring by the West. A case study of this kind of blackmail is what happened to Professor Reinhard Bendix, of the University of California, when he was asked to read a paper at the recent congress, in Amsterdam, of the International Sociological Association:

*July 26th, 1955:* Bendix sends in his paper, "The Suppression of the Class Structure in a Totalitarian Régime"—the régime being the East German People's Democratic Republic.

*August 18th:* Professor T. H. Marshall, of the London School of Economics, chairman of Bendix's section of the congress, accepts the

paper, noting that the totalitarian countries will not be represented.

*October 26th:* Thomas Bottomore, executive secretary of the Association (whose headquarters are in London), writes Bendix that a slight problem has arisen: there *will* be Soviet sociologists at the Amsterdam congress after all, and he and Marshall fear the paper will provoke the Russians to counter-attack with critiques of Western capitalism, wasting time and reducing the scientific content of the congress. Perhaps he would like to tone it down; it is up to him; the paper has been set and galley proofs are enclosed.

*November 8th* (Bendix to Bottomore): "Naturally I would regret it if my paper were responsible for intransigence and sterile polemics but . . . this is a risk which I shall have to take. . . . I think it would be an awkward precedent if Western scientists refrained from critical appraisal of Soviet practices, even if at a particular meeting Soviet scientists refrain from a critical appraisal of Western practices."

*December 6th:* Bottomore asks Bendix to agree to a few minor changes in style, as per enclosed; he is sure Bendix appreciates their difficult situation and their desire to eliminate political polemic from the forthcoming congress; his is not the only such problem—they have also had to restrain Arab sociologists from denouncing Judaism and Israel.

*December 13th* (Bendix to Bottomore): "I have examined the proposed deletions and the only reasonable course of action I can see is to withdraw the article. . . . The deletions are not 'minor' nor are they merely concerned with moral overtones. For example: . . . They would eliminate all references to the 1953 East German uprisings. Since the occurrence itself is not in dispute, I cannot see that a reference to it can be called 'moral condemnation.' . . . Finally, the deletions propose to eliminate all references to the existence of a secret police and its impact upon the society. . . . Frankly I find no comfort in the fact that I am not the only one, for I see no analogue between my paper and the denunciation of Judaism and Israel. Though my own value-position is clear by implication, the substance of my paper is factual and interpretive, not denunciatory."

At this point, Professor Robert C. Angell, of the University of Michigan, who is president of the Association, came in with a compromise line of bowdlerisation: omit all material from refugees (they might be prejudiced), replace "dictatorial" with "authoritative" (*sic*—presumably he meant "authoritarian"), call the secret police "security police," etc. (He explained to Bendix that the Association hoped to forge scholarly and personal ties with the Soviet dele-

gates which would be especially valuable if any later became high government officials.) Bendix submitted still another draft to Marshall, accepting as many of Angell's retouchings as he felt he could. On January 13th, 1956, however, Marshall wrote Bendix that it was all off; two new developments had occurred—Eastern Germany was sending delegates (one might think this would have made Bendix's paper *more* desirable) and he himself had become director of the Social Sciences Department of UNESCO; since the department was trying to promote East-West intercourse, it would be awkward for him to preside over a meeting that included Bendix's undiplomatic paper.

Thus Western scholars import political censorship from the East, in an effort to "get along" with the Russians. The effort is naive, or perhaps cynical, but in either case a shabby business. It also seems to have been unnecessary, judging from a letter I have seen from a participant in the de-Bendix Amsterdam congress: "It was clear from the behaviour of the Russians that nothing anyone printed or said would have led to a walk-out or break in communications. One Western delegate got up the first day and attacked them for presenting propaganda papers. Nothing happened. . . . They always replied firmly but politely." The letter also suggests that the Russians at Amsterdam, as at other scholarly congresses, don't make enough of a contribution to justify the Angell-Marshall-Bottomore solicitude for their good opinion: "Unlike other East European delegates, they came as a delegation, with propaganda papers, and would usually have one of their group speak officially. . . . They were extremely dogmatic on all questions." The only kind of Iron Curtain scholars we have any hope of influencing are the thawed-out satellite delegates, especially those from Poland. "The Poles were the real surprise of the congress. As Raymond Aron said, they didn't seem to know which side of the Iron Curtain they were on. There were two members of the central committee of the Polish Communist Party among them, but even they were fairly free. When I asked one Polish delegate what the workers thought of the régime, he said, 'Why ask? Look at Poznan.'" When I asked another—in a group of ten Poles and six Americans—about academic freedom, he replied, "Why ask? Don't you read your own press? It does a good job on reporting what's happening in our country."

I think the Poles would have enjoyed Professor Bendix's paper.

**P**RE-20th century scholars had one great advantage over their modern colleagues: they didn't have so much data to work with. Research libraries now tend to double in size every sixteen

years. At this rate, The Yale University Library, for instance, by 2040 will find itself with 200 million volumes, 6,000 miles of shelves, and 3,000 librarians. Such, at least, is the gruesome prediction of the Council on Library Resources, Inc., which the Ford Foundation has recently created, endowing it with five of its \$2,500 millions. (Confronted by a Problem, the German turns to a government bureau, the Englishman writes to *The Times*, the Frenchman does nothing, and the American sets up a committee.) After the manner of its kind, the Council will evaluate the basic factors, pinpoint the variables, mobilise the topflight experts, and blueprint a plan of action. Whatever comes or doesn't come out of its labours, one thing is certain: its reports will take up a few more inches of space on the Yale Library's shelves.

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BRITISH dialogue (1): A—"Have you found X's address in the files?" B—"Not really, no." British dialogue (2): A—"Have you a date for lunch?" B—"I have, actually."

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IT WAS Goethe, I believe, who said of Byron that as a poet he was a genius, "but when he thinks he is a child." I would put it the other way round: the "poetic" side of Byron seems dated and stagey now, while *Don Juan* and the letters reveal a surprisingly mature mind, tough, humorous, masculine. But Goethe's epigram applies very well to the three great masters of the American silent film—Griffith, Stroheim, and Chaplin, each of whom combined an instinctive mastery of cinematic effects with a naïve unconsciousness of the meaning of their films. I once spent an evening with Griffith; it was in the thirties, years after he had made any films; he looked and behaved like an old-style ham actor of the Walter Hampden school, hawk-nosed, dramatic in gesture and voice. He was quite drunk and kept putting in long-distance calls to Hollywood stars who always seemed to be "on the lot"; this didn't discourage him—"Just tell her it's Mr. Griffith calling; she'll come." But she never did. Later he had a print of *Intolerance* run off for us. As we followed the monumental architectonics of the film, in some ways the most ambitious use of montage ever attempted, with its four stories in different historical epochs counterpointed one against the other, with the fantastic Babylonian scenes and the stark grey newsreel realism of the modern strike and prison scenes—as we dedicated *cinéastes* followed, or tried to, his masterpiece, Griffith kept up a running stream of comment. "That's Jack Barrymore," he would say as a super emerged briefly from the mob around Christ (H. B. Warren) on the cross. "His first

screen appearance." "See that girl with the plate of grapes? That's Joan Crawford [or some such]; I gave her her first part." We couldn't get him talking on the magnificent technique; what evidently impressed him, and what he thought would impress us, was his prowess as a "star-maker." What we thought his badge of honour—that Hollywood couldn't use him—he was ashamed of; his comments, like his long-distance calls, were to show he wasn't a back-number, a has-been. Griffith was the inventor, and to this day remains, except for Eisenstein, the most creative user of the two basic elements in cinematic technique, montage and the close-up; but when he thought, he was a child.

I remembered that comically frustrating evening—like meeting Titian and getting from him only gossip about the dukes he had painted—when I saw Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux* at the National Film Theatre. It is really two films: one a sentimental melodrama, the other a comedy in the old Chaplin style, quite as good as anything he has ever done—including *Four A.M.* and *The Pawnshop*—that burlesques the melodrama. What makes it confusing is that Chaplin shifts gears between the two without apparently knowing he is doing so. He will be strutting around in a comic scene with Martha Raye, flourishing his moustaches in an exquisitely shaded parody of the stock-company notion of a *boulevardier*, and in the next scene, with a pretty street waif as his foil, he will be playing the part straight, hamming it up with innocent relish. It is unsettling to see an actor brilliantly taking off the conventional rhetoric of his trade one moment and the next employing it seriously, especially since Chaplin's serious rhetoric expresses a vain and foolish concept of himself—as the tragic man-of-the-world, disenchanted, elegant, sensitive, the gallant protector of the weak who, to make the bogus diamond shine all the more brilliantly, are usually crippled or blind. (In the film after *Verdoux*, the disastrous *Limelight*, this mawkish exhibitionism goes right over the edge.) There is even a third film here, that bursts into the last part with shattering banality, a "message" drama, the message being that a man is a hero if he kills wholesale (like Napoleon or Hitler) but a murderer if he does it retail, an irony that was probably first observed by some ur-Montaigne of the time of Belshazzar. It was a sad day for Chaplin when the intellectuals convinced him he was the Tragic Clown, the Little Man. From a parodist he graduated into a philosopher, but since his epistemology was all instinctive, even physical (his eyebrows, fingers, teeth "know" precisely, instantaneously how to behave in order to mimic a clergyman, a banker, a dandy, a tramp), it didn't help him in his new rôle. The

nature of reality, which he understood intuitively as a mime, become opaque to him when he tried to think about it, and where he once danced lightly he now stumbles into bathos and sentimentality.

**I**F *Verdoux* is a study in rhetoric, Donskoy's Maxim Gorki trilogy (*The Childhood of Maxim*, 1938; *My Apprenticeship*, 1939; *My Universities*, 1940) is the most unrhetorical cinema I have ever seen, with one exception. (Shepherded there by David Sylvester, I recently saw the trilogy at the Everyman in Hampstead, where it is revived annually.) The exception is *Zéro de Conduite*, which the first two parts of Donskoy's trilogy resemble in presenting life from the viewpoint of a child, with the sudden baffling transitions, the obscure motivations, the poetic daze of adult life as it appears to a sensitive child, achieving a kind of direct realism which is so lacking in the literary-dramatic conventions we are used to that it has a surrealist effect. Like *Verdoux*, the great silent cinema of Eisenstein, Pudovkhin, and Dovshenko was rhetorical; unlike it, the rhetoric is conscious, intellectual, a "grand style" developed by sophisticated artists who knew just what they were doing and analysed it in books and articles. Donskoy breaks sharply with this tradition; his work is low-keyed, unemphatic, emotional rather than intellectual, intimate and lyrical; he gives us not the masses, not History, but individuals (and what individuals—a whole gallery of grotesques, eccentrics, pungent characters like the grandfather and the bakery owner, noble people like the grandmother!); although the photography and technique are good, they are not either striking or original; the montage is conventional and there are none of those

dramatically composed single shots that burst on the eye so powerfully in *Potemkin* and *The End of St. Petersburg*. (When Donskoy does attempt the grandiose, as in the unfortunate last episode in the last film, where he tries to generalise the meaning of the trilogy, he fails, perhaps because like the American masters he is an intuitive rather than a conscious artist.) The whole effect comes from simply keeping the camera on real people—how seldom, I realised after seeing these films, does one see human beings on the screen, each behaving always according to his special personality and yet each being always unexpected—and presenting their slyness, greed, humour, violence, affection, rage, wonder, meanness, generosity without rhetorical emphasis and without explanation. Things are not "built up" any more than they are in real life; scenes are not resolved, they just stop, sometimes abruptly, sometimes ebbing away. Often nothing "happens" at all—as in the barge-unloading scene in Part 3 where, conditioned by Hollywood, I kept expecting a *dénouement* but where, for all the dramatic tension, at the end we have simply witnessed—a barge being unloaded; though we have also experienced a poem about the joy of co-operative work. When one stumbles out of the theatre, one feels one has lived the lives of the shadows on the screen. Donskoy carries out the logic of realism and, as always happens when the logic of any approach to life is carried out to the end, produces a profoundly artistic effect. Realism carried that far becomes formalism. Luckily, Stalin's cultural agents were not acute enough to realise this, which explains how Donskoy was able to make a great film, the only one in my opinion to come out of Russia since 1930. They thought *Gorki* was a respectable exercise in socialist-realism. In this, as in other matters, they were wrong.

# Letter from Andorra

## From Torquemada to Tourism

NO COUNTRY in the world has changed less in the last ten centuries, and more in the last ten years, than Andorra. A few years ago reputable and reliable works of reference (for example, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* itself) informed us that Andorra's industry "apart from half a dozen tobacco factories" was merely domestic, while lack of capital and initiative, remoteness and poorness of communications, prevented development. Or, to quote another learned source: "There are only two roads in the whole country and the most usual form of transport is the back of mule or man." All this was literally true in 1946: it is ridiculously out of date in 1956.

Andorra is the new rich among nations—but she is that very rare phenomenon, the good-mannered, modest, and likeable new rich. A quarter of a century ago the country lived on a starvation level. Wonderful opportunities for smuggling (and smuggling used to be Andorra's chief national industry) during the Spanish civil war alleviated this dire misery; World War II made Andorra reasonably well-off; and the post-war mania of tourism made her prosperous. Andorra—high up in the Pyrenees, between France and Spain—is still served by two main roads only and the road to France (the-almost-8,000-feet-high Envalira Pass) is impassable for seven months in the year. Feudalism still survives in Andorra and Andorra alone: the country still pays feudal tribute to France and Spain. (I do not quite understand why this annual tribute should be about £1 to France and £5 to Spain. Spain is more in need of money, I suppose.) Having crossed the Franco-Andorran frontier at Pas de la Casa and reaching the villages of Soldeu and Canillo, I found myself back in the darkest Middle Ages: I looked at the houses—built of stone, with roofs of slate and small wooden balconies—and I looked at the faces of the people and I could not get rid of the thought that the very same people must have inhabited the very same houses for the last 500 years. I also remem-

bered that if someone were sentenced to death here he would be executed by the garotte. This method has not, it is true, been in use in Andorra for about seventy years but it has not been officially abolished. And yet, a few miles further on, one sees modern hotels, modern blocks of flats, and a few shop windows which would not be out of place in the Rue St. Honoré; one finds oneself in a country with 6,500 inhabitants who own more than a thousand motor-cars and have offered hospitality to more than 400,000 tourists this year. (The proportionate figures for Britain would be more than 7½ million motor vehicles and more than 3,000 million friendly visitors in 1956.)

ANDORRA is often called affectionately "the little republic." But she is by far the largest of the miniature states. With her territory of 180 square miles (about the size of the Isle of Wight) she is three times as big as her nearest rival Liechtenstein, and more than three hundred times as big as Monaco. It is true, however, that Andorra has the smallest population: her 6,500 people amount to less than one-third of the population of Monaco and half of that of San Marino.

Nor is this "little republic" a republic at all. Nor is she a kingdom or a principality. Andorra can boast of no ruling prince who can conveniently fall in love and marry a film-star. In fact, one of her two princes can never marry anyone at all. He is the Roman Catholic bishop of Urgel; his colleague and co-prince is the President of the French Republic. The ecclesiastic prince lives in a neighbouring Spanish village of 4,000 inhabitants and takes a great, personal interest in the affairs of his subjects; the secular prince—the President of France—is farther away and seems to be preoccupied with other problems. He has delegated his princely duties and prerogatives to the prefect of Perpignan. The co-princes are represented to Andorra by a modest type of High Commissioner, called

vicars, who also function as criminal judges in the law courts.

Historians have been arguing from time immemorial whether the destiny of nations is decided by the masses or by individuals; whether it is historical circumstances that create the great leader or vice versa. Be that as it may, I think they forget that sheer good luck plays as big a part in the life of nations as it does in the life of individuals. I do not wish to elaborate on this proposition and I shall only mention Poland: a country with an unlucky past, a country placed between two (or at times between three) great powers and losing her independence now to this, now to that, and occasionally to all three neighbours. The same set of circumstances has proved to be good luck for little Andorra. She could never have survived in the shadow of one huge neighbour; but she could flourish, or at least remain in existence, on the jealousy and rivalry of two. Neither France nor Spain was really keen on absorbing the unfriendly rocks and poverty-stricken villages which used to be Andorra; but neither would tolerate the other doing it. Andorra has managed an entertaining game of chess between the two co-princes and has, indeed, succeeded in defying France more than once in the past. In 1928 and again in 1933 all the eleven policemen of Andorra had to be disarmed because they constituted a menace to the security of France.

Andorra's other stroke of luck was the outbreak of tourism in post-war Europe. Tourism seems to be an infectious disease, reminiscent of the great mass-migrations of the Middle Ages. For a few months every year, hundreds of thousands of people are on the move and there is not an empty hotel-room between Helsinki and Gibraltar and between Torquay and Yalta. The Andorrans still do not quite understand why the foreigners—French, Spaniards, Germans, English, Swiss, and Scandinavians (in that order—no Americans as yet)—come and what they want. They only know that while before the war not one single tourist visited their country, they now swarm in in their tens of thousands and in a few years the number of annual visitors is bound to reach the half-million mark. Hotels spring up from nowhere; all sorts of buildings are erected practically overnight; trade is booming; and—the sure sign of urban civilisation—it is already difficult to park a car in Andorra la Vella (the capital) or Escaldes (the largest city, 900 inhabitants). The Andorrans look at the foreigners in polite and amused surprise, take their money, and grow richer and richer every day. Saudi Arabia struck oil; Andorra struck tourists.

The tourist, for his own part, knows perfectly well why he has come. The country is breath-

takingly—almost incredibly—beautiful; the people are charming and dignified Catalans, reserved yet kind, and perfect gentlemen all of them; and Andorra—as it has no duties, indeed no customs official at all—is ridiculously cheap. For 30s. you can get an excellent pair of shoes, for £2 a pair of lizard skin shoes; you can buy the best French brandy for 8s. a bottle; all French perfumes are much cheaper than in France, Swiss watches cheaper than in Switzerland, German cameras considerably cheaper than in Germany, and English cars incomparably cheaper than in England. It is very tempting to buy all these goods galore—and forget that, alas, on all other frontiers you will be greeted by the monstrous and grinning figures of the customs officials. One of the three main routes from France to Spain leads through Andorra and it is almost worth while for the motorist to come here to fill up on petrol costing 1s. 2d. a gallon.

THE Valley of Andorra—as the country is officially called—has an ancient, feudal constitution, only slightly modified in modern times. The Andorrans call themselves the “descendants of Charlemagne”—a doubtful claim, but Charlemagne is not with us any longer to dispute it. He is also claimed to have personally signed the foundation charter of Andorra, but the authenticity of this document—as an Andorran historian puts it with typical Andorran understatement—“has not convinced everyone.” There is no doubt, however, that Andorra has been in existence for at least seven centuries. According to its Seigniorial Constitution a council of twenty-four is elected by male voters of the six parishes. (Women neither possess nor desire the vote.) The council chooses two Syndics from its own ranks: the First Syndic is the supreme executive, the second is his deputy. There are two civil judges appointed by France and the Bishop of Urgel respectively. They judge all cases according to Andorran laws and customs, based on ancient Catalan law. Final appeal is open either to the Supreme Andorran Court at Perpignan or the Ecclesiastical Court at Urgel—whichever the appellant may fancy.

Andorra's Parliament, the Casa de la Vall, is without any doubt the ugliest, most wretched and ramshackle parliament in the world. It resembles a dilapidated cottage in Wigan. But the view from it is certainly finer and more impressive than that from any of the more renowned legislatures. The Casa de la Vall also contains the state prison. In the golden days of 1953 there was a short time when this contained three prisoners—one of them a long-term convict who had been sentenced to three years for practising medicine without proper qualifications. The

prisoners were free to come and go as they wished and they spent their evenings playing cards with the jailer. When I visited the Parliament, the prison was empty and the jailer lonely and melancholy.

Andorra, by the way, has four real doctors, four lawyers, one hospital, but no university. Indeed, she possesses no schools at all, above the elementary level.

**N**O PRISONERS . . . no schools. . . . One can compile a most impressive and dazzling—yet, I feel, endearing—list of all the things Andorra does not possess.

To begin with, she has no currency of her own. In principle *all* foreign money is accepted, but in practice it is mostly French francs and Spanish pesetas that are used. You may pay in one and receive change in the other. Nor do the Andorrans really care about making exact calculations about the respective values of these two currencies. In Andorra—but nowhere else—1,000 francs are equivalent to 100 pesetas. One day you may lose on this deal, the next day you may make up for it.

Nor do the Andorrans—contrary to the general belief—print their own postage stamps. Postal services are provided by France and Spain—there are two Post Offices, one French, the other Spanish, facing each other on the main square of the capital—and both the French and Spaniards print stamps for Andorra, and, needless to add, do a brisk trade in that product.

No, the Andorrans do not print money or stamps—in fact they do not print anything at all. Andorra has no press—no daily or even a weekly paper. The lack of an Andorran press is more surprising than the lack of currency because, in a strange and limited way, Andorra is the capital of Catalan culture. I do not mean to suggest that Andorra la Vella puts Barcelona to shame; but it could do so if it chose. Catalan is spoken, as is well known, in the Spanish province of Catalonia, the capital of which is Barcelona; it is also spoken in French Catalonia—with Perpignan as its capital—and on the Balearic Islands and in Sardinia. The Catalans have always been very independent people and are suspected both by Spain and France of having separatist tendencies. In Spain, written Catalan is forbidden as a language—there are no Catalan newspapers and not even street names are written up in Catalan—and in France, too, the language is frowned upon. In little Andorra alone is Catalan the official language; but apart from street names, legal notices, and advertisements, it is not used in print. Andorra is the citadel of Catalan culture in that she is the only place which can openly and proudly

proclaim its Catalan heritage and could publish Catalan newspapers and literature—if only she would.

“Of course,” I said to a dignitary, “the lack of a daily paper is partly made up for by Radio Andorra as a source of information.”

He smiled but said nothing. It took me a day or two to find out the reason for his smile. Radio Andorra—opened in August 1939—is indeed the country’s most famous institution—but it is also the only radio station in the world which broadcasts no news or any information whatsoever. . . . It is a purely commercial station, broadcasting recorded music and advertisements for twelve hours a day.

**B**UT let me continue the list of things Andorra does not have. She has, thank Heaven, no ordinary art treasures, proper museums, ancient Gothic cathedrals, Roman ruins, or old masters; she has no tennis court, no golf course, but—surprisingly enough—she does possess some excellent venues for American bowls. Andorra has no army, and consequently there is no compulsory military service for her citizens. Should any Andorran join the French or Spanish armed forces he loses his citizenship. Andorra has no political parties at all—people vote for personalities with whom they are personally acquainted. The country has no customs duties and no direct taxation. When a car is imported, the importer may pay £10 for his road licence once and for all. Or the state may come to an agreement with a shopkeeper, cinema proprietor, or landlord by which he pays £5 or £10 tax per annum—irrespective of his turnover or real income.

Andorra has no railway and no airport. The French and the Spanish concluded an agreement in 1904 to build a railway line through Andorra between Ax les Thermes—that most charming French thermal resort high up in the Pyrenees—and the small Spanish town of Ripoll, but the railway has remained unbuilt as yet. This year an improvised airfield was put into service, but the first plane to land there crashed when taking off again, the pilot was injured, and the Andorran authorities prohibited the further use of the airstrip. So the only way to reach Andorra remains by car, by bus, or by mule.

To proceed with my list, Andorra has no industry—or no industry to speak of. I have mentioned smuggling which used to be Andorra’s national industry and I am sure no Andorran would regard this remark as offensive. The two chief articles smuggled were Andorran-grown tobacco to Spain and cattle to France. Now the uninitiated might remark that cattle, being rather large animals, do not seem pre-

eminently suited for smuggling. But they really are. There are many passes in Andorra and not all can be guarded; then again some French cows have the rights of pasture on Andorran fields and who is to notice if rather more cows return to their French sheds in the evening than left in the morning? "The smuggling of cattle goes on all right," I was reassured by an Andorran official. Then he added with a sigh: "Unfortunately, tobacco-smuggling is getting more and more difficult. . . ." He looked towards the immense peaks surrounding us and added wistfully: "Perhaps we are getting too respectable for it." He said nothing more. But I am sure he meant to add a warning: "Woe to the nation which becomes too respectable for smuggling."

The only truly and purely Andorran product I came across is a cigar. It is an incarnation of the small-country complex: Andorra may be one of the world's tiniest states, but the cigar it produces is certainly the largest ever produced anywhere: it weighs two pounds and is twenty-five inches long.

To conclude my list I should like to add that until quite recently Andorra had no national anthem. A priest, Monseignor Benlloch, finally wrote one and a church organist, Enric Marfany, set it to music. Nowadays whenever the Andorran football team meets the team of Perpignan, Toulouse, or Urgel for an international match—and on all other festive occasions—the Andorran national anthem is played.

**A**NDORRA has two acute problems on hand at the moment: one is a foreign political conflict with France, the other an economic question—a problem of prosperity.

The conflict with France arose around the radio station. The matter is rather complicated but the gist of it is that Radio Andorra—a private limited company owned mostly by French shareholders—has a monopoly in broadcasting in the country; nevertheless France asked for concessions to build another station and the Andorrans refused. France, in retaliation, started throwing her weight about and one of the steps she took was the refusal to recognise Andorran passports as valid. As a result, Andorrans can travel to Spain on an Andorran passport, but to France—and indeed anywhere else—they need a travel document issued by the Vicar representing France.

"A passport is the outward symbol of nationhood," a high-ranking official told me. "How

can any self-respecting, independent nation forego its right to issue passports?"

"I hardly believe," I had to admit, "that the United States would stand for it."

Andorra's other problem is connected with the Envalira Pass which blocks the route to France for seven months a year. Andorra is a wonderful country for skiing but no tourist—except Spaniards who are not really such keen skiers as the Norwegians—can reach it. For five months in the year more tourists come to Andorra than she can cope with; for the other seven not a soul. The problem is: how to attract winter tourists?

They thought of building an overhead cable-railway but they cannot afford it; or a tunnel—but it would have to be  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles long and they cannot afford that either; they thought of employing a large number of snow-ploughs but they cannot afford it and, besides, it would only take fresh snowfall to frustrate the most energetic efforts. Aeroplanes would do—but they cannot land except on airfields and Andorra has no airfields. They were also toying with the idea of helicopters but helicopters cannot fly high enough to hop over the Envalira Pass. Obviously, here is a wonderful opportunity for a large concern to negotiate a monopoly and open up Andorra—one of the best skiing centres in Europe—for winter sports. Capitalists of the world—unite!

Well, this is Andorra. It is superbly beautiful; it is cheap; it is tiny; it is fascinating and very much out of the ordinary; it is a place untouched by all modern wars—even Napoleon's; it is the last feudal state in the world with the problem of how to build a cable-railway for skiers weighing heavily on its mind; it is unchangeable and constantly changing. And it is more than all that. The Spanish civil war existed for Andorra merely as a source of income, Andorra was untouched by it, and untouched by the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the Kaiser and Hitler, the awakening of Asia, and similar events. It still knows nothing of the discovery of America. From the Age of Torquemada, Andorra dived into the age of the Conducted Tour. From the age of witches and stakes she was delivered into the age of souvenir hunters and luxury hotels with one single jolt. In the Andorran calendar the year 1491 was followed by the year 1950. I am not sure whether it is good for one or not; but I am certain this is one way of preserving eternal youth: skip 500 years.

*George Mikes*

# Discussion & Comment

## Old Ideas and New Men

MR. WOLLHEIM does not disguise which side he is on in the debate between Right and Left (ENCOUNTER, October). The result is, not an analysis of political arguments, which the title leads one to expect, but an essay for Socialists on what Socialists should think about next. This allows him to introduce a number of the sort of spurious points which are current at a lower level of political controversy. Does he really believe that the post-war Labour government created full employment, or that principles are only to be found in the Labour Party?

The best that he can find to say for the Conservatives is that they make a regular practice of running off with their opponents' clothes. But surely since 1945 all the stealing has come from the other side. In the sphere of economic policy, which for the past ten years has been paramount, Labour have undergone a startling conversion. The tenets of classical Socialism have been quietly dropped one by one, and what is left is the policies of the Right wrapped in the emotions of the Left. Now, it appears, they are all out to capture the Liberal Society, a most incongruous addition to the wardrobe. This change of front is no doubt part of the reason why (in my opinion, contrary to Mr. Wollheim's) there has indeed been a swing of intellectuals towards the Right. Intellectuals gravitate to the party which has the best arguments, and up till recently the good arguments have been on the Right. (Suez may however have restored the balance.) Mr. Wollheim may firmly believe that the weight of "superior intellect and ability" are on his side; but his party will have to do something to prove it.

The author surely cannot expect to be taken seriously when he attributes to the Conservatives only interests, while the Labour Party is allowed principles as well. The attribution to your opponents of the lowest possible motives, as he himself notes, is a hack move in the political game. It does not follow that because a party does not mouth general principles on its platforms or in its pamphlets that it has none; or that a party that talks in the language of principles will act in the same way. A battle of personalities masked by a clash of principles is as common as the re-

verse, and there is no reason to suppose that the recent Conservative shake-up, about which he is so scathing, differed in anything but idiom of expression from the recurrent struggles within the Labour Party. The safest method of discovering principles is by making inductions from the actual behaviour of each party when in power. If this is applied to both parties the principles which emerge appear, curiously enough, to be roughly the same. Life is complicated, even without Professor Oakeshott, and we have no right to complain if these principles are not splendid general theories, but poor tentative creatures hedged about with qualifications and reservations.

If, as I believe with Mr. T. E. Utley, Butskellism is still the dominant force in British politics, Mr. Wollheim has missed the point. In his enthusiasm for the lunatic fringes he has overlooked the centre, where the main debate, one not mainly of principle, but of ways and means, is being carried on. It is there that the policies of the present and future are hammered out.

G. H. ELLIOT

*Edinburgh 5*

ONE of the most interesting pages of ENCOUNTER is "About Our Authors" and it was curious to read there that while Mr. Wollheim *was educated* at Westminster, Mr. Wiles *studied* at Winchester. I was at Westminster quite recently and one often came across people studying.

STEPHEN CANG

*Gonville and Caius College  
Cambridge*

## The Captive Mind

AN author should never object to criticism, if it is his literary capacities that are called into question by a critic. If, on the contrary, his truthfulness is being questioned, he is entitled to an answer. Mr. K. A. Jelenski and Mr. Peter Wiles, in their articles on Poland, suggested that my analysis of the Stalinist period in the "popular democracies" had lost its validity, as my book *The Captive Mind* gives a too sophisticated explanation for what was simply the result of terror. I do not think I was wrong. It is a well-

known phenomenon that, after a totalitarian myth topples down, its entire system of ideas seems to have been made only of thin air. People do not like to remember the tortuous self-justifications to which they had recourse, and they would willingly claim they had always been as knowing as they appear to be after the idols are smashed. They would explain their behaviour by nothing but compulsion and fear; even the most intoxicated would swear they had always seen through the officially-imposed lie.

Moreover, my book is concerned with one segment of the population only, and does not pretend to cover all the people. It seems to me that my analysis has been confirmed by the moving confessions of those who do not try to present themselves as having been wiser than they were—namely, the university youth. The Warsaw papers are full of such confessions. If the impact of the Stalinist doctrine upon the human mind is denied, how do Mr. Jelenski and Mr. Wiles explain that crisis of “the lost faith” so deeply felt in the new generation? May I quote from an open letter of an 18-year-old Communist student, published this year by a Warsaw weekly, *Nowa Kultura*: “I am ashamed of everybody and, first of all, of myself. I am ashamed of my stupidity and of my credulity. I do not know whether I will be able to recover my confidence and to look people in the face. I have no basis any more to believe anything in the world. If you cannot trust men, ideas do not lead anywhere. I do not know what I shall do. Perhaps now, when the errors of the past have been courageously admitted, a true Communist ideal will be taking shape. A new epoch, beautiful and pure, could begin. But probably I shall not be with you as I have no reason to trust you. I wish that epoch arrives and you fully succeed, but do not wonder at us, the young.” This passage alone is enough, in my opinion, to back my argument.

My book, so far as I know, is considered in Poland as a truthful report of the situation existing up to 1955. I have been recently told that it could have appeared over there now “if only one chapter were added about the changes that occurred recently.”

I am very glad that the book in question is, to a great extent, no longer valid as a description of my country. This does not mean that all the painful things I had touched upon vanished overnight, or that they will vanish in the near future. Unfortunately, Poland is at the present moment a sort of exception in the Communist bloc and my book still preserves its relevance when applied to my country's eastern and western neighbours.

CZESLAW MIŁOŻ

*Brie-Comte Robert, France*

## About Equality

LAST week my husband and I entertained a friend of my son's, a young national serviceman based at the Royal Naval Barracks, Portsmouth. We decided to take the two boys out to dinner and booked a table at the Keppell's Head Hotel, Portsmouth. When we arrived we were refused admission to the dining-room because our guest was in a Naval Rating's uniform. The head waiter was extremely apologetic and suggested it would be “all right” if the boy could wear a raincoat over his uniform. The boy did not have a raincoat with him but would not have worn it if he had, nor would we have allowed him to. We had no option but to withdraw and dine elsewhere.

LESLIE JOHNSON

*Rowner, Hants*

“How is Mr. Crosland going to deal with the English public schools?” was a question that kept me in suspense as I followed his series of articles “. . . About Equality.” Obviously he had something up his sleeve, a proposal to nationalise them, or perhaps to do away with them altogether. What he finally came out with was a curiously impractical compromise by which the public schools, while theoretically remaining independent, would give 50 to 75 per cent Government-aided “free places”—he was careful not to call them scholarships—to boys chosen not on the basis of merit, but of some sort of proportional class representation.

To limit the enrolment of a school to the sons of gentlemen, regardless of ability, may be arbitrary. But to insist that 50 to 75 per cent of the enrolment must be drawn from the classes that do not qualify as gentle, also without regard to ability, seems just as arbitrary. One class is merely being substituted for another.

Mr. Crosland rules out competitive entrance examinations, surely the fairest way of giving all comers an equal opportunity, on the grounds that too many U boys might still get in. Hence his proposed percentages. But would it be quite fair to deny brainy U boys equal educational opportunities simply on the basis of class? There can be no real equality where discrimination exists, no matter against whom. And how are his 50 to 75 per cent non-U boys going to improve their accents if they only hear each other speak, while the boys with the U accents, barred from their former haunts, are being secretly educated under the hedgerows, like the Irish scholars in Cromwellian times?

It is hard to make out whether Mr. Crosland is more anxious to see the public schools get their come-uppance, or to spread the blessings of higher education more widely. Wouldn't it be

better to extend the type of education offered by public schools to greater numbers of people, instead of merely to different people? And couldn't it be done more economically? Only about a third of the fees charged by boarding-schools goes for tuition. The other two-thirds go for things unrelated to learning: food, services, and the like, and in addition there are the extras, such as clothes. (How could an underprivileged family afford an Eton wardrobe?) If the amounts required to send several thousand underprivileged boys to first-class schools were used to send several thousand first-class schoolmasters to underprivileged schools, the standards of those schools would be raised, the size of the classes could be halved, and eventually a few million boys would benefit.

In spite of their sometimes snobbish and always expensive sides, independent schools, to use a term that conveniently covers both the English "public" and our American "private" schools, do have a function to perform. They set the standards. Because they are competitive, the standards must be high. If an independent school turns out illiterates, parents will send their children elsewhere. This keeps such schools on their scholastic toes.

They also introduce new ideas. In America, "progressive" education, derived from the theories that Professor John Dewey taught at Columbia University, was originally put into practice by experimental private schools. Unfortunately, some of the state public-school systems ("public" in the literal sense) not only seized upon the progressive idea but allowed it to run away with them to the point where in many cases their curricula have been practically voided of content. . . .

Keeping abreast of changes in the social climate, some of the formerly most exclusive private schools are now granting scholarships in proportions of up to 20 per cent of their student body. The scholarships are paid for out of their endowments, or contributions from alumni, who are sometimes heard to complain that their money is being used to keep their own sons out. . . .

Most American private schools have religious affiliations, and among Protestants, the Episcopal schools of New England enjoy the greatest social prestige. On the whole these schools have managed to eat their cake and have it in an egalitarian society, without coming too heavily under left-wing fire, by liberal scholarship programmes and by staying out of the public eye as much as possible. Their graduates have developed a high degree of democratic protective colouring. Old school ties are never worn excepting at school reunions and football games, and to wear them outside the charmed circle of one's peers

is considered ostentatious. Prominent political figures are apt to be reticent about a private-school background. Following the example of Groton's most famous graduate, President Franklin Roosevelt, leading Democrats like Governor Averell Harriman, also a "Grottie," and Governor Adlai Stevenson, Choate, omit to mention the old school in their *Who's Who in America* listing, though not, be it noted, in the English *Who's Who*.

However, to attack the private schools is politically unpopular, due to the size of the Catholic electorate and the fact that by far the largest number of non-state-supported schools is maintained by the Catholic Church, which thus oddly finds itself buttressing the position of the Protestant institutions.

Another reason why the antagonism towards private schools is less in egalitarian America than in class-conscious England may be that in this country a private-school education does not necessarily confer superior job opportunities. The Foreign Service, certain old law firms, and certain fashionable banking and brokerage houses favour the socially presentable. But almost anywhere else, a young man applying for a job would do well not to advertise the fact that he went to a private school. Since his prospective boss probably went to high school, and favours high-school boys, it would be more likely to lose him a job than to get him one.

In any case, when it comes to getting the better jobs, it is the college degree that counts, and in the field of college education, equality reigns supreme. Young men who care about that sort of thing may prefer to work for an academically respectable B.A. from one of the older "Ivy League" colleges, but aside from these there are literally hundreds of colleges throughout the country, many of which include frankly vocational courses in their curricula. And in spite of Deweyism, high-school boys account for more than half the enrolment in colleges like Harvard and Princeton, and for most of the enrolment in other colleges.

As one objective in the attack on class barriers in England, why not take the standardisation of accents? A first step might be the creation of a corps of speech experts, Professor Higginses dedicated to giving all the young Doolittles in England such a thorough elocutionary going-over that no longer, to quote from the lyrics of "My Fair Lady," would every word they utter condemn them to the gutter. No pupil would be promoted until he or she could correctly enunciate "In Spain the rain stays mainly in the plain."

To head Operation Higgins, an admirable appointment would be that of Miss Nancy Mitford, who should be given discretionary powers

over all forms of usage taught by the experts. One of her most important duties would be to keep them abreast of the changes in aristocratic *argot* that would inevitably occur as soon as the populace began to say napkin instead of serviette. . . .

SONIA CONVERSE

Villanova, Pennsylvania

### A Small Green Insect . . .

It is sad to note Mr. David Wright, a critic of refreshing honesty, disappearing down perhaps the least rewarding of the false trails in his review of *New Lines* (ENCOUNTER, October).

For, half the time, he seems to be reviewing not what is actually there but a preconceived idea: that imaginary, or at least irrelevant, bugbear—"The Movement." This word was originally applied some years ago in the *Spectator*, I think, to a group of poets who were then going in for what were described as "rich Empsonian ambiguities" and paying a lot of respect to Dr. Leavis. Two or three of the nine poets in *New Lines* certainly started out this way, but even they have pulled free and are no more to be blamed than Yeats is for having once been Pre-Raphaelite. And I should have thought that most of us pretty obviously had no dealings at all with Empson or Leavis or any of it. There are two pages in my introduction notably hostile to the Movement (which I dissociated the rest of us from to the extent of referring to it as "that group") and to its formulæ, but conceding that it had been of some slight help in teaching a few poets one of many necessary lessons. How Mr. Wright reads this as going overboard for Empsonianism is beyond me.

I do not know how far this particular confusion has affected the rest of Mr. Wright's argument, but it looks pretty odd to me. The idea that Mr. Larkin and others are attempting to flatter the public by dealing carefully and comprehensibly with genuine and usual emotions seems to me to be the wildest illusion. What the public wants in poetry, as in its Sunday papers, is sentimentality and sin, with maybe a bit of the religiose. Let Mr. Wright ask himself what poets the public have really gone for in recent years.

A large part of Mr. Wright's review deals with two light poems of Mr. Amis and Mr. Larkin. It is quite clear that he does not understand them at all, owing to a complete blind spot about the relations of irony and sentiment. This naturally vitiates a lot of his general remarks. But what seems to be possible to save from the wreck is the thesis that "to write poetry you have to be a poet first." I.e. a poet's idea of himself is a more important criterion than his actual

poetry. Is not this the very vulgarity which Mr. Wright claims he finds elsewhere—the film public's notion of the Poet, a sort of glorified Dowson. A poet, Mr. Wright implies, cannot be a don (bad luck, Gray), or a librarian. What else can't he be—an actor? A clergyman? A civil servant? A philosopher? (You can fill in the names yourself.) The implication at least is that he must be a bar-fly, sponger, or literary hack. Good luck to those who can get away with it, and there have certainly been good poets in all these categories. Here, as elsewhere, it is Mr. Wright, not I, who is trying to cut everything down to a narrow and exclusive formula.

For perhaps the great error of Mr. Wright and the other Angry Penguins is their extraordinary narrowness of definition when it comes to poetry. In spite of a strong general preference for poetry which uses *all* the human resources, I at least would admit that there can be good poetry of all sorts of types, right up to the extreme dionysiac—such as, for example, Mr. Thomas Blackburn sometimes writes. But Mr. Wright virtually denies that there can be good poetry of extreme (or indeed of any) intellectuality and "objectivity." It is tiresome that it once more needs repeating that Pope and Dryden are poets—in every generation *must* Arnold's blood be shed?—but it proves the degeneration of standards, against which I was mainly inveighing.

Mr. Wright—I hope he does not mind my declaring his interest—is the star of a forthcoming anthology which is specifically anti-*New Lines* (and it is not uninteresting that four of the poets—sorry, Poets—in this new collection have already contrived to review *New Lines* itself, sometimes after reading it). I'm sure it will sell well: there are always plenty of school-girls about, of all ages and sexes. But now I too am being unfair, for I have no real doubt that its poems, or some of them, will be better than its principles.

ROBERT CONQUEST

London, W.C.2

In taking refuge from a sudden shower the other day, I happened to alight on a page of ENCOUNTER. There I was shocked to see the kindly words "A small green insect shelters in the bowels of my quivering typewriter" introducing a bloodthirsty onslaught on something called "The Movement." Of poetic politics I am ignorant. But as one who has himself suffered from inclement weather, may I venture my opinion that Mr. Enright's hospitable action was only right and proper, and that in holding it up to scorn Mr. Wright has done me and mine a grave Wrong.

A SMALL GREEN INSECT

To an English writer remote from both the London and the provincial literary rackets the fuss made about the poetry of "The Movement" has always been a sad puzzle. This poetry seemed a kind of austerity article produced in complete conformity with the authorised economy standards; that it should arouse enthusiasm was incomprehensible. Mr. David Wright's admirable review in the October ENCOUNTER makes the puzzle less sad, but, despite the fun, it is still a puzzle.

What is there to praise in the work of these dull poets? Is dullness now a poetic virtue? Must English poetry become as stodgy as English cooking? The cold rice pudding served up by Mr. Larkin, Mr. Wain, and the others is not, alas, a novelty in England. Surely the same taste and texture are to be found in, for instance, this:

*All pay themselves the compliment to think  
They one day shall not drivel: and their pride  
On this reversion takes up ready praise;  
At least, their own.*

Or in this, which shows that the poets of "the Movement" are not the only ones to play for safety:

*Poems, the hop-grounds of the brain,  
Afford a most uncertain gain;  
And lotteries never tempt the wise  
With blanks so many to a prize.*

And I doubt if any of them do better than this:

*Dip but your toes into cold water,  
Their correspondent teeth will chatter:  
And strike the bottom of your feet;  
You set your head into a heat.*

These quotations, which speak in the very accent of the Movementers, in the same drab dialect, are respectively from Edward Young, Matthew Green, and Matthew Prior; quotations, that is, from writers who contributed notably to establishing what was, perhaps, the most boring period English poetry has ever known. Anyone with the patience to read through their works, or those of Armstrong, Blair, Byrom, Churchill, Glover, Warton, to mention only some of the many forgotten names of the period, can find hundreds of similar verses, all written by poets with "a negative determination to avoid bad principles" no less firm than that of Mr. Conquest's new liners.

That "poetry is on its way back to the middle-brow public" with any, or indeed, all of these writers, may well be true. Nor would it be surprising when one considers other evidence of that public's taste. What is unfortunate is that a kind of poetry scarcely worth producing (even its dullness is not a new kind of dullness) is obscuring the work of poets who belong to no

movement, such as Mr. Jonathan Griffin, whose remarkable trilogy *The Hidden King* triumphs again and again over risks which would paralyse the imaginations of the negatively determined poets of "The Movement." . . . Mr. Wright's excellent review was a useful contribution to the restoration of poetic values, but much more will be needed during the next few years if the attempt to establish a new age of dullness in poetry is to be successfully countered.

ALEXANDER HENDERSON

Rome

THANK you for Mr. David Wright's just and by no means too firm pronouncement on the troop of Mr. Empson's performing fleas. There is one thing that escaped them all about Mr. Empson: he happens to be a poet, that is, a man with enough passion, unanalysable motivation behind his verse to make it sing. He is a poet in precisely the same way that Herrick was a poet: he writes verse that, stemming from such passion, really sings. The fact that he is an intellectual genius probably limits rather than enlarges his poetry: certainly it is only a secondary gift, like Blake's "hallucinated vision," Hopkins' sensual imagery, or Wordsworth's sense of the sublime in nature. He has given us a new word-music, and that will outlast even the clever books he writes on words and such byways of literary art.

Is it not time now to reassert some simple truisms about poetry that these young men seem to have forgotten, or never known? That what poetry *is* is verse that sings. This is the only one identity of poetry: there is nothing else that it has that other arts do not also have. Having got thus the identity right, it may be said that a poem should say something as well as sing, that it should be highly imaginative, original, inspired, be the product of a new way of seeing life, and be elevated above the common. One could go on, but that will do for now, except to add that poetry is a public and not a private thing.

TOM SCOTT

Edinburgh

MR. David Wright's review of the poets of "The Movement" is both timely and interesting. It reveals the weakness of this contemporary adventure in poetics as being the age-old one of mistaking the callow for the simple.

Before I was fourteen I was working in the steel industry, which remained my environment for over twenty years. I have had long experience of what a lack of money, influence, and education can mean to a young poet. These are realities of which any poet might justly complain;

beside them Mr. Larkin's regrets seem feeble and otiose.

In any case, as Mr. Wright observes, degrees of badness need no "Movement" for their celebration. They prove nothing except that major poets are very rare, and minor poets of worth none too plentiful. Mediocrity is a weed which has the flowering habits of the gorse; one need not search far to find it in a healthy state of full and perpetual bloom.

EDGAR FOXALL

Wirral, Cheshire

### At the Tate Gallery

IN the September number of *ENCOUNTER*, David Sylvester, writing of the placing of sculpture in the Tate Gallery, says of Giacometti's *Pointing Man* that the stand it is on is too high and that this particular work should be placed on the ground or "hardly above" it for best effect.

I do not know whether the staff of the Tate Gallery have deliberately placed this work as high as it is or not; but it is interesting to note that in Faber and Faber's recently published *Contemporary Sculpture: An Evolution in Volume and Space*, the author, Carola Giedion-Welcker, writing of Giacometti, remarks:

"This work could not suffer a tactile approach since that would rob it of its mysterious tension in time and space. *Very often Giacometti withdraws his figures from possible intimacy by interposing a pedestal and raising them into a spatial and spiritual zone of unreality . . . their intensity is psychic*" (p. 93).

The conclusion to be drawn is, I think, obvious.

MARY GERARD

London, N.W.3

### The Crisis in Theology

IF I have understood Canon Vidler aright the crisis in theology might be described thus: Theology as a subject differs today from other university disciplines in that they are committed to empirical and rational methods, with the testing of hypotheses, or the subjection of established valuations to criticism in the light of new or revised information; that they rest in fact on

the assumptions of scrutiny and scepticism. Theology "investigates essential theological presuppositions" (although there is wide disagreement about these presuppositions) which, in their nature, can be only partially investigated by those methods which are now accepted in other disciplines. In any case these methods have been only partially, and varyingly, acknowledged by theologians. The question then arising is, why theology continues as a university subject, and why it alone is the preserve of a vested interest—of people committed, in a general way—to a distinctive creed? The development of empirical method—historical and scientific—has caused some theologians to question, and deny, various of the presuppositions previously made, but it has left a number of contending parties; but the changes have not yet brought about the withdrawal of theologians from the universities, in spite of the somewhat ludicrous position which, today, they occupy in that setting.

Would it be fair, then, to suggest that theologians, in so far as they have heeded modern empirical methods, have been shown the untenability of many of their assumptions? They have reacted differently; some refusing to accept evidence distasteful to their faith; some retreating from evidence which they could not conscientiously controvert, into positions of mysticism where all such evidence becomes "irrelevant"; some accepting the conclusions of empirical scholarship but retaining their salaries and stipends for a discipline the bases of which they have seen swept away. All have managed to hang on to their privileged but obsolete position in the universities. Might it not be the case that if, as Canon Vidler appears to believe, theology's best promise is with the laity, this is precisely because the laity are less compromised in knowing less of modernist scholarship in theology (a subject on which so many of the clergy are diplomatically silent). The laity may well feel sociological and psychological needs for a core of accepted belief and a cluster of transcendental values which disregard the sort of scholarship accepted in a university—these people then rush in, where the clergy, in their sophistication, now fear to tread.

BRYAN R. WILSON

The University, Leeds

D E N T

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# BOOKS

## The New Forsyte Saga

"I ASKED myself frequently, while I was in Russia, whether one was conscious of any curtailment of personal liberty. In the round of daily life, I could not see that it differed much from our life. . . . If one was law-abiding, and if one conformed, one could live in peace and comfort. . . . I did not myself talk politics while I was in Russia, not because I was deliberately refraining, but because I do not normally discuss them in England, for I am not interested in party politics. They always seem to me to be, like sanitation, necessary but not a civilised subject for conversation."

Thus Dr. Enid Starkie, Fellow of Somerville College and Reader in French Literature at the University of Oxford, in a recent *Sunday Times*. One is inevitably reminded of the Webbs; and then one is struck by how different this is from the Webbs. Like Dr. Starkie, they too removed their shoes before the portals and wandered in blue-stockinged feet. But when they left, they were waving a red flag; Dr. Starkie is holding aloft an aspidistra. They thought they had found the promised land; she is content to believe that she has discovered an eastern annex of the Establishment. They proclaimed how marvellously different Soviet Russia was from the West; she announces how marvellously similar it is. A curious reversal. . . .

It would seem that, while we scan Western skies for no less a person than Godot, when we turn east toward Russia we look expectantly for—is it Soames Forsyte? What we despise in ourselves we admire in them; the conformism, the philistinism, the materialism, the careerism. If one says (as so many do) that the Soviet Union is now entering a "Victorian" period, this assertion is understood to carry with it a seal of approval. And the more bibulous and vulgar Mr. Khrushchev is, the more favourable is our impression of him.

There is nothing really mysterious about this: much as we look down upon dull and conventional people, we do prefer them to interesting homicidal lunatics. And if Russian Communism has indeed become dull and conventional, there is ground for our satisfaction. Nevertheless, it does come as something of a shock when one

stops to realise how times have changed. This is one of those moments when one longs for a comic historian, someone with a nihilist streak who would contemplate human affairs under the sign of utter absurdity: a Muggeridge-turned-Macaulay, as it were. Who else could do full justice to these four astonishing decades of Russian history, from the "planning" of agriculture by urban fanatics who didn't know a pig's snout from a cow's teat, to the mutual assassination of high-minded comrades, down to the thundering anti-climax in which a portly cigar-waving commissar rides across the stage in a gold-plated Zis while the band plays "Take Me Out to the Ball Game"?

THIS phenomenon—Soviet Russia's "settling down"—is the theme of two recent books, both extremely serious and yet as unlike each other as two Soviet studies can be. *How the Soviet System works*\* is a report of the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System, sponsored by the United States Air Force under contract No. 33(038)-12909. It is based on detailed interviews with large numbers of Soviet refugees in Europe and America, and is very sociological in its approach and solemn in its movements. (The authors, solemn sociologists all, inform us in a preface that "after many months of irresolution we decided to let alphabetical sequence determine the order of our names on the title page.") It is decidedly an American book: academic, dully written, clinical in tone, and a bit unworldly in its easy assumption that the people who live in Russia are all part of A System; it is also shrewd, precise, cautious in its generalisations, and sensitive to the nuances of Communist ideology. As a contrast, there is Edward Crankshaw's *Russia Without Stalin*,† a very British book: personal, opinionated, brilliantly written, full of superb descriptions of Soviet life, boldly speculative on Soviet political trends, and very much more interested in the Russians as a people than in Communism as an ideology.

\* By RAYMOND A. BAUER, ALEX INKELES, CLYDE KLUCKHOLN. Oxford University Press. 38s.

† Michael Joseph. 18s.

Though Messrs. Bauer-Inkeles-Kluckhohn doubtless regard Mr. Crankshaw as a "mere journalist," while Mr. Crankshaw contemplates them in turn as bookish drones, the fact remains that the picture they give of the Soviet Union is strikingly similar in its essential details. What is the attitude of the Soviet people toward their régime? They desire its drastic modification, but not its overthrow. What parts of it would they like above all to see abolished? The secret police and the collective farms. What is their image of an ideal, yet practicable, social order? The Russia of the NEP period (1921-8), when there was a less rigorously controlled and more "mixed" economy. Which group is most contented under the present régime? The technicians and professional workers. Which is the most discontented? The peasants. Is the average Russian interested in establishing a parliamentary democracy on the Western model? No. Is the younger generation Marxist in its philosophy? Yes and no: those who claim to be Marxists have precious little idea of (or interest in) what Marxism is; those who dismiss the whole subject as a bore are nevertheless inclined to think in Marxist clichés. (One is reminded of Kirilov's remark about Stavrogin: "When he believes, he does not believe that he believes; and when he does not believe, he does not believe that he does not believe.")

Even where there is an obvious difference in emphasis between the two books, it does not amount to much in practice. Thus, it is Mr. Crankshaw's view that the idea of "world revolution" is no longer seriously entertained by the Soviet leadership, while the American scholars think that Leninism is still something more than a sacred cow set out to pasture. But since Mr. Crankshaw also explicitly states that traditional Russian messianism, along with the instinctive dispositions of a great power that is young and dynamic, will make for an aggressive foreign policy, this divergence is not so crucial as might appear at first sight. (It is true that, on the American view, the question of the Kremlin's relation to the world Communist movement achieves a more serious status than, in Mr. Crankshaw's opinion, it might merit. But it is clearly possible to believe *both* that the Soviet leaders do not care a fig for "World Communism" and that they will do what they can, for reasons of expediency, to sponsor and cultivate those groups outside its own borders who do care.) In general, the Americans prefer to regard Marxist-Leninism as spiritually dead but doctrinally alive in Russia, whereas Mr. Crankshaw is persuaded that the doctrine is dead and only the spirit survives. These two theories intersect, however, in the recognition that Communism in the Soviet Union has in effect become "a way of

life," with all the vagueness, the inconsistencies, and the indefinabilities that such ways of life possess.

ON THE quality and value of this way of life, the American authors very properly do not pass judgment. It is not their job, after all, as social scientists to express preferences for one way of life over another; and it would not be of any use to the U.S. Air Force, either. Mr. Crankshaw on the other hand, and also very properly, has no such inhibitions. He thinks the new way is an improvement over the old, pre-Communist way. He doesn't approve of all of it, to be sure, and is frequently censorious; but he thinks it is going along the right lines and that, in the not too distant future, it may attain. . . .

What? This question is never answered explicitly, but the implications of his book are fairly clear, and utterly depressing. One of Mr. Crankshaw's chapters bears the title "Moral Rearmament Without God," which is his definition of the prevailing ethos in the Soviet Union. It sounds ironical, but it is not so intended: he is *for* "moral rearmament without God"—at least for Russians. The truth is that Mr. Crankshaw, despite his avowed love for the Russian People, doesn't really like Russians insofar as they are Russians. He thinks they need an awful lot of doing-good-to ("the greatest 'do-good' movement in history" is how he characterises Russian Communism), and is willing to make all sorts of allowances for their rulers who—by hook, crook, or downright murder—are having to deal with so delinquent a population: hence his reluctant praise for Peter the Great, Ivan the Terrible, Lenin, and Stalin. Despite his being a novelist and a sensitive man of letters, Mr. Crankshaw, like Dr. Enid Starkie, approaches Russia with an antiseptic bias. He despises the "dark superstitions of the Russian faithful"; and although it may be assumed that he still reads Dostoevsky and Tolstoy with pleasure, they are for him (as for the cultural commissars) only relics of the past. He disclaims any antagonism to religion *per se*; he merely would like to see Greek Orthodoxy more closely resemble the Church of England, as he would also like to see Russian peasants transformed into good, solid, reliable English yeomen. His enthusiasm is lavished on the younger generation of Russian womanhood—"clean-limbed, slender, fair hair gleaming"—who could almost pass for students at Roedean. The virtues he prizes are "endeavour, self-denial, and moral rectitude," and he is persuaded that these are becoming more abundant in Russia than they had been. To "sadness, scepticism, and irony—the three strings of the Russian lyre" (Herzen) he is strangely deaf. And as for all the dreams that

went into the Revolution, all the yearnings for a society that would transcend the bourgeois order, all the fervour for a radical transformation of the human condition—it does not occur to him to mention them, or to measure the tragic distance between these visions and the New Forsyte Saga whose imminent appearance he announces.

He does, however, have a good eye for an aspect of Soviet life today that is not so well-brushed and “forward-looking,” in the official sense of the term. In one of his most fascinating chapters, Mr. Crankshaw reports on the “deviationists” (non-political) among Soviet youth, and

more particularly on the *stilyagi*—those sons and daughters of the new patricians who, instead of reclaiming virgin lands, indulge in very unvirginal pleasures; who also drink too much, listen to jazz records, keep late hours, and on the whole behave like their non-conformist counterparts in St. Germain-des-Prés, Chelsea, or Greenwich Village. While conceding that they are provoked to such goings-on by the ennui and dullness of Soviet existence, Mr. Crankshaw is positive that the future does not belong to them. In view of our post-Forsyte experience in the West, one wonders if he has the right to be so positive.

Irving Kristol

### FORWARD FROM THE WELFARE STATE

MR. CROSLAND calls his book *The Future of Socialism*,\* but its scope is more limited than this title would suggest. What it is concerned with is the future of England, assuming that the Labour Party were soon to return to power. In the light of existing economic and social conditions, what policies ought the Labour Party to pursue?

In a recent article in *ENCOUNTER*, Mr. Richard Wollheim made a plea for political empiricism, as against what he called political puritanism, and he implied that left-wing theorists were always in danger of being excessively puritanical; of regarding certain principles as sacrosanct independently of the actual state of events. Mr. Crosland escapes this charge. The great merit of his book is that its approach is wholeheartedly empiricist. He has his principles, but he is always ready to test them by seeing how they would work in practice. He knows when he is making moral judgments and distinguishes them clearly from descriptive statements of fact. And when he propounds a factual thesis he is careful always to set out the evidence on which it is based. Since he is also very conscientious in examining possible objections to his views, his book is extended to a considerable length. It runs, in fact, to 529 pages, which is more than I think he really needed for the exposition of his main ideas. But it is extremely well written and, in spite of my moderate appetite for economics, I did not find that my interest in it flagged.

His empirical approach leads Mr. Crosland to question principles which many socialists are inclined to take for granted. In particular, he

argues that, as things now are, private ownership of the means of production is not an important source of power. There are various reasons for this: the tendency for shares to be distributed among a large number of owners who take little interest in the concern so long as they receive their dividends; the increasing divorce of ownership from management; the control exercised over all industry, whether private or public, by Whitehall. This control is not absolute; the procedure is still to “incline rather than necessitate” and the government’s suasion may be resisted: but in this matter the nationalised concerns are not bound to be the most docile; it very much depends upon the personalities of those who happen to be in charge. Accordingly, one is not surprised to find that Mr. Crosland does not look upon nationalisation as an economic panacea. His view is that certain industries require it, for special reasons of size or function or structure, but that most, if not all, of these have been nationalised already. To extend the practice very much further, beyond re-nationalising iron and steel, would bring no economic gain and in some instances would be positively disadvantageous. Neither is he impressed with the alleged evils of competition. On the contrary he points out that from the economic point of view our present society is remarkably uncompetitive, that under whatever government is in power there is only a small display of private enterprise, and he thinks we might well do with rather more. In the same spirit, he is in favour of economic incentives to make people work, and he is not in favour of a national wages policy.

In general, on the purely economic side, Mr. Crosland has little fault to find with things as they are. He would like to see some changes

\* *The Future of Socialism*. By C. A. R. CROSLAND. Jonathan Cape. 42s.

The Right Hon.

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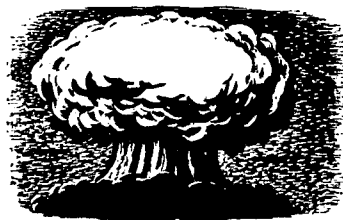
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made; the introduction of appropriate fiscal measures to encourage saving; the taxation of capital gains; a superannuation scheme for all; a tax upon gifts to prevent the avoidance of death duties; a combination of profits tax and investment allowance to limit the amounts distributed by private firms in dividends; a readiness, with which a Labour government might be credited anyway, to use price-control and subsidies as a check upon price inflation, but even so only as "short-term emergency measures." None of these proposals is especially radical: they are pieces of economic engineering within the existing structure. The structure itself is sound. There are still great disparities in wealth, but while some remain very rich, few are now very poor. Thanks to the Labour Government of 1945, the fundamental goal of freedom from want has been largely attained. And the policy of full employment, which the Conservatives also have accepted, is likely, Mr. Crosland thinks, to bring about increasing prosperity. He remarks that though "Britain today is probably the least competitive nation in the world . . . we are already achieving a rate of growth which, if maintained, will double the standard of living in twenty-five years."

WHERE then, it may be asked, are we to look for Mr. Crosland's socialism? The answer is that he identifies it very largely with the achievement of equality, and that he is in favour of equality on moral grounds. If he wishes still further to redistribute wealth it is not because he thinks that the rich are sinister, that they operate as a class in defence of their economic interests to the general detriment, but because in many cases their riches are unearned; and he thinks it wrong that people should enjoy wealth that they have done nothing to deserve. He is not, indeed, an out-and-out egalitarian. He sees that power and authority cannot be equally distributed, and he allows that those who have greater responsibilities, and those who have the talents to render greater services, in one way or another, should be more greatly rewarded. What he is chiefly concerned with is equality of opportunity. This is partly defensible on grounds of national interest: the existence of "village Hampdens," and even of "mute inglorious Miltons" is a waste that the country cannot afford. But mainly, for Mr. Crosland, it is a matter of justice. Not everybody can enjoy the bigger plums; there are not and never can be enough to go round, but it is right that everybody should be given a fair chance to pick them.

In this direction also we have made some progress: an impressive sign of it is the change in the character of the university population since

the war. But it has not gone very far, or at least not far enough. Worse still, the economic levelling, and even the greater extension of opportunity, such as it is, have not brought a social levelling with them. Ours is still an excessively class-ridden society, and its class-consciousness manifests itself in preposterous ways. "An Englishman's way of speaking absolutely classifies him: the moment he talks he makes some other Englishman despise him." And Mr. Crosland echoes Professor Higgins' complaint: "Why can't the English teach their children how to speak? This verbal class distinction by now should be antique." His answer is that they can't teach them how to speak because they can't get them into the right schools. It is the distinction between the major public school and the minor public school, between the minor public school and the grammar school, between the grammar and the secondary school that is responsible, in Mr. Crosland's view, not only for unfair divisions of opportunity, but for a great deal of social frustration, envy, and heart-burning.

I suspect that Mr. Crosland exaggerates this evil. No doubt the people who worry about the type of school they went to, worry very acutely, but I wonder if such feelings are quite so widespread as he assumes. I should have thought that from the social point of view, and certainly from the point of view of enjoying better opportunities, the question of going to a good university was at least equally important, though I admit that the two may be in some degree connected. Moreover, pre-occupation with the old-school tie, or even with the way that people speak, is only a symptom of class-feeling: Mr. Crosland is so concerned with the symptoms that he does not attempt the extremely difficult task of uncovering the underlying causes. All the same, he is quite right in holding that one of the most important, perhaps the most important, reform that now needs to be effected is a reform in our educational system. But when it comes to constructive suggestions on this point he has not very much to offer. He thinks that the public schools should be allowed to maintain their position but that a change should be made in the conditions of entry to them, resulting eventually in a majority of free places, and he thinks that the grammar and secondary schools should merge into comprehensive schools. But the example of comprehensive schools in America is not wholly encouraging, and if the prestige of the public schools is a social evil, it is not obvious that it will be removed merely by changing the character of the beneficiaries. The production of an élite by methods based more strictly upon merit has manifest advantages: but will it diminish social resentment? Mr. Crosland's own

remarks about the workings of the eleven-plus examination suggest the contrary. This is a field, however, in which it is very much easier to find fault with the suggestions of others than to make positive suggestions of one's own.

A POINT which I think worth noting is the degree to which Mr. Crosland's socialist England of the future resembles present-day America. On the economic side there is not a great deal to choose between them, and America is relatively free of the special types of class distinction that Mr. Crosland finds most objectionable in England. Yet I do not suppose he would maintain that the Americans had achieved an ideal society. The trouble is that equality of opportunity, freedom from want, even a large measure of social equality do not necessarily suffice to produce the tolerance, the good taste,

the love of art, the contentment and joy of life that Mr. Crosland rightly prizes. But again, I know no better than he does how these ends are to be achieved: and perhaps he is right in thinking that on the whole we have made progress towards them.

In general, the tone of Mr. Crosland's book is optimistic; and this optimism is facilitated by the fact that he restricts his view to England, without bothering overmuch about the world as a whole. I rather regret this limitation. I should like him to have dealt with the question how far our prosperity is enjoyed at the expense of less prosperous peoples and whether it is possible for a socialist to regard this as morally justifiable. But he has tackled the problems which he does raise in so honest, lucid, and interesting a fashion that it would be ungrateful to complain that he has not dealt with more.

A. J. Ayer

## COMMONWEALTH POETRY

*A national literature comes to consciousness at the stage at which any young writer must be aware of several generations of writers behind him in his own country and language, and among those generations several writers generally acknowledged to be great.*

T. S. ELIOT: "American Literature and the American Language."

WHAT these two anthologies\* do not seem to express to me is the existence of a New Zealand or of an Australian poetry, and barely, I am afraid, the existence of English poetry written in Australia and New Zealand. What they do demonstrate is perhaps the great difficulty of writing poetry at all in such places.

Why is it that all writers born on the fringes of the sometime Empire who achieved anything worth truly serious consideration are almost without exception those who came to live in Europe? May it not be because the artist (to be specific, the poet) requires a community (rather than merely an audience) in which he can flourish, and such communities do not yet exist (though they may be beginning to) in comparatively newly inhabited territories? Yeats said that a poet needs the company of his intellectual

peers; and while there are good men and true in Torowangee, in Wanganui, or for that matter Klerksdorp, they are unlikely to be those who are much concerned with what Ezra Pound calls the life of the mind. Even Yeats left a provincial Dublin for London, as, later, Joyce left it for Paris; as young men, Pound and Eliot migrated from a provincial America for Europe—for what but the same reasons? Poets are born, indeed, but they are also made (though not by universities); when young they need the criticism of (*pace* Dr. Leavis) other poets and the provocation of the mentally aware among their contemporaries. For example, Wordsworth was a poet of whom it is possible to claim that his friendship at a crucial time with Coleridge helped to make a great one.

All this does not imply that there is no verse of talent to be found in either of these two anthologies. In fact there is a good deal, especially in the New Zealand volume, but very little that makes an impact by reason of its universality. Queer as it is to come across Hellenic deities bobbing woodenly across a self-consciously antipodean backdrop, it is no less awkward to find Captain Cook for instance inflated to a sort of makeshift Æneas; indeed it is rather sad when one reflects on the useless labour put into the manufacture of these displaced or phoney mythologies. But now and then somebody ceases to flatter the local scenery and/or citizenry to hit out, e.g. the Australian A. D. Hope:

\* *A Book of Australian Verse*. Selected with an Introduction by JUDITH WRIGHT. Oxford University Press. 15s.

*An Anthology of New Zealand Verse*. Selected by ROBERT CHAPMAN. Oxford University Press. 21s.

*They call her a young country, but they lie:  
She is the last of lands, the emptiest,  
A woman beyond her change of life, a breast  
Still tender but within the womb is dry;*

*Without songs, architecture, history:  
The emotions and superstitions of younger  
lands.*

*Her rivers of water drown among inland  
sands,*

*The rivers of her immense stupidity*

*Floods her monotonous tribes from Cairns to  
Perth.*

*In them at last the ultimate men arrive  
Whose boast is not "we live" but "we survive,"  
A type who will inhabit the dying earth.*

*And her five cities, like five teeming sores  
Each drains her, a vast parasite robber-state  
Where second-hand Europeans pullulate  
Timidly on the edge of alien shores.*

This straight-from-the-shoulder stuff Mr. Hope proceeds to dilute with the patriotic/sentimental argument that if prophets come from deserts then from Australia may come

*some spirit which escapes  
The learned doubt, the chatter of cultured apes  
Which is called civilisation over there.*

The poem in fact begins with a bang but ends with a local whimper. Why? It is not, I think, that Australian or New Zealand (or for that matter Canadian and South African) poets have a legitimate obsession with their native countries, but that they haven't, yet feel they ought to, which contributes a hollow ring to so many of their verses. You do not find it, for instance, in English regional poetry—e.g. the idea that the Helpston neighbourhood should have a specific importance for anyone but himself obviously never crossed the mind of John Clare; he just loved it, said so, and didn't feel the need to make claims or argue about it; and the last thing any poem can do is to argue.

**B**UT there is one poem—I think it the best of any in either anthology—which seems to me to escape from this category of the local and provincial into the regional but universal in a way that none of the others do. I quote it practically in its entirety:

#### HOUSE AND LAND

*Wasn't this the site, asked the historian  
Of the original homestead?  
Couldn't tell you, said the cowman;  
I just live here, he said.  
Working for old Miss Wilson,  
Since the old man's been dead.*

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FABER & FABER

*Moping under the bluegums  
The dog trailed his chain  
From the privy as far as the fowlhouse  
And back to the privy again,  
Feeling the stagnant afternoon  
Quicken with the smell of rain.*

*There sat old Miss Wilson,  
With her pictures on the wall,  
The baronet uncle, mother's side,  
And one she called The Hall;  
Taking tea from a silver pot  
For fear the house might fall.*

*She's all of eighty said the cowman  
Down at the milking-shed.  
I'm leaving here next winter,  
Too bloody quiet he said . . .*

*. . . The sensitive nor'west afternoon  
Collapsed, and the rain came;  
The dog crept into his barrel,  
Looking lost and lame.*

*But you can't attribute to either  
Awareness of what great gloom  
Stands in a land of settlers  
With never a soul at home.*

This is by the New Zealand poet Mr. Allen Curnow, who is well represented, as are two other of his compatriots, Mr. Denis Glover and Mr. James K. Baxter, whose work stands out in a drear waste of average feeling, thinking, and versification. As for the Australian volume, it is a matter of regret, perhaps, that its editor has grimly omitted anything by Ern Malley, who produced better verse than most other Australians. That "Ern Malley" was a hoax seems to demonstrate that such practical jokes on the Muse are apt to boomerang, at least in Australia. The two collaborating fabricators of the "Ern Malley" poems are given space, indeed, for their individual productions; but neither Mr. McAuley's nor Mr. Stewart's verses that great original proclaim.

David Wright

## PUBLIC SERVICE

THE art of writing State papers is a considerable one. Sir Eyre Crowe's celebrated memorandum, enunciating the theory that Britain must always range herself against a European nation capable of exerting a decisive military power on the Continent, is a masterpiece of concise expression. It gives an outline as vigorous as it is misleading of certain essentials of British policy; it is a document covering a wide field and it can be read and understood by an intelligent person in a few minutes. I call it misleading because (in the version I have read) it takes no note of when the British public can be persuaded to join action in such a case; and also, and in proof, because I remember the disastrous effect of this statement when during the war well-meaning propagandists overseas used sometimes to quote it as an elucidation of our opposition to the Nazi tyranny. But it is a masterpiece of the style in which it is written, a style which combines brevity with elegance, set phrases with a certain individual tone, detachment with principle: in short the style of the despatches which circulate in the Foreign Service and the Ministries. After a lifetime of service, having mastered this excellent instrument of literary expression, civil servants are often persuaded to write for publication when some freedom of expression is allowed them on retirement. The results are usually interesting and charming, but seldom such as can be called

"a book." Lord Strang has proved an exception. He has retired and, using a style indelibly marked "Foreign Office," he has set down memories of his life and the outcome is a book\* indeed. *Home and Abroad* is likely to be often consulted by historians, but more than that—much more—enjoyed for its own excellence.

This is not to say that the author has risen over all the perils of his situation. A good diplomatist must be the most discreet of men, but a writer must have a natural bent towards the vice of indiscretion. This is not to urge that a writer's duty is to produce volumes of malice, but that he must take in all his experience and use it somewhere, if he can. Preferably so as not to hurt others, but better to hurt others than leave what is expressible unexpressed, for then it is likely to go bad and infect the store. All this has been said already much better by many other people, but I bring up the question because occasional overdiscretion is the one failing in this valuable production. Lord Strang accompanied Mr. Chamberlain on his flights to meet Hitler in 1938. He was present at the first meeting between our then Prime Minister and the monster of Berchtesgaden. To open the encounter "a somewhat macabre tea party" was arranged. There was small talk which, says Lord

\* *Home and Abroad*. By LORD STRANG. André Deutsch. 21s.

Strang, "is best left in oblivion." No! Wrong! Oblivion is precisely where it should not be left by the eye-witness author. This, to put it vulgarly, is what we bought the book for. And were we not right? Strange personal experience is what the reader justly looks for in the personal recollections of an eminent man who has played an important and sometimes leading part in the great events of his time.

My complaint may seem trivial, the moan of a fribble who is interested in tea parties, but in fact Lord Strang's occasional excesses of reserve lead him further than this stinting of the appetite for gossip and put a grave blemish on one part of a book whose main character is admirable. The hero of the story is that most lovable of statesmen, Ernest Bevin, and Lord Strang's account of his service under that valiant and unconventional chief is one of the most fascinating and moving things in his book. But the record has a gap. It may be that Bevin's reputation in history will stand or fall by his conduct of the Palestine question. Our abdication of the Mandate may have been a crime, may have been a sorrowful necessity. I have not the means of knowing. What, as a speech-tortured elector and the writhing target of numerous propaganda-drives and rallies, I do know is that the Liberal and Labour parties in the thirties and during the war used Zionism as a vote-catching device, and thus made promises which, unless they were so innocent of the world that they never should have accepted office, they knew to be wholly incapable of fulfilment. Bevin had to meet the creditors. Whether he did so courageously or wisely, or, as his numerous and skilful detractors insist, in a sudden fit of Foreign-Office-induced reaction which turned to anti-Jewry, is not for an uninformed person to say. All that such a one can know is that the charges against Bevin are grave and that an essay on him by an informed person must take note of them. All that Lord Strang says is that "Bevin disengaged in Greece and Palestine as, in another sphere, the Government disengaged in India and Burma." Discretion on this scale defeats its own ends as the reader may be left with the notion that the matter does not bear dwelling on. The author of such a book as this one is perfectly entitled to say that he must not discuss some question for reasons of State, but he must say so plainly and eloquently, not seek salvation in a brief official-sounding statement about disengagement in the vain hope (very vain indeed) that the reader will think that everything was all right.

**N**O MORE grumbling. The highlights of the book (as I think) are the author's records of his army days in World War One, of the

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LONGMANS

trial in Moscow of the British engineers accused in 1933 of treason, and of the Moscow negotiations of 1939 in which, it will be remembered, Lord Strang played a valuable and much misrepresented rôle. A lesser light, but a high one, is a chapter in which he describes the sort of life led by a permanent Under Secretary in the Foreign Office. Most people grow to enjoy work in their mature years, but this account of the enormous burden which is imposed on the head of a ministerial staff must make the stoutest quail. We all murmur from time to time that we have too much to do (I murmur about having to write articles); but after reading of the ceaseless toil and absolute suppression of private life exacted from a senior public servant, I for one recognise that I hardly do anything at all. I lead a life of leisure. So do most other people. A most agreeable thought.

The story of the negotiations for a military alliance with Russia in 1939, the only thing which could have prevented the outbreak of World War Two, is complex in detail, simple in outline. The Russians wanted to avoid war and it seemed to them, not unreasonably, that alliance with either side would guarantee their own peace. I had not realised before reading this book just how near they came to agreement with the Western Powers, and one must admire, even if one does not agree with our policy, the tenacity with which we held to our principles. The temptation to abandon the rights of small nations must have been very serious indeed. To conclude an alliance on the terms the Russians wanted must have cost us that moral leadership which was to be our salvation in the years of defeat ahead, but it must also have postponed war, perhaps for many years, perhaps for ever. We had scruples about an ignoble peace. The

Nazis wanted war, and as they had no principles of the kind which hampered us in negotiations, their chances of success in obtaining an agreement were always greater. In the German Ambassador, Count von der Schulenburg, they had a matchless negotiator. The fearful story is told by Lord Strang with exactness and a fine eye for detail. The researcher must go to the published State Papers, but the general reader will get as much from this well-constructed personal record, as he could from labouring through the official despatches. Lord Strang corrects the persistent popular fallacy that the negotiations broke down over the Baltic States. This is not so. They broke down over Poland. When the Munich Agreement was signed in 1938 the Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs said to the French Ambassador: "My poor friend, what have you done? For us I see no other way out except a fourth partition of Poland." Shrewd and ominous words.

Lord Strang retired from the public service in 1953. A comparison between his own feelings and those of Ernest Bevin at that dread moment in a man's life emerges from the book, though it is evidently not intended. The great Labour Minister broke down. He said to his Under Secretary: "I was born into a poor little home and went to a poor little school, and look what I have done in the world. And now they want to throw me out on the scrap heap." It is a tragic picture, the common destiny of men who have exerted great authority and have come to know the appetite for power, and cannot face deprivation of what the appetite feeds on. Lord Strang had the advantage of considerable mental resources. He settled down to a long-delayed study of Proust, Balzac, and Dante. He also wrote this book.

*Christopher Sykes*

## SUICIDES IN LONDON

**S**UICIDE is a mortal sin against God. It appears as a crime at English Law as an inheritance from Canon Law. Paradoxically, the temporal courts, by their liberal definition of insanity, employ this intrusive Church Law to protect those who commit suicide from the spiritual condemnation of the Church. Attempted suicide is generally regarded as an offence calling for the remedial powers rather than the punitive powers of the courts. The courts' mild use of their powers over those who have attempted suicide, and its unwillingness to see those who have committed suicide refused Christian burial, would suggest that suicide re-

mains a crime in English Law only as a sop to rigid Christian opinion. In practice, I doubt if this is true. Intelligent Christians increasingly doubt whether the sanctions against sin are necessarily strengthened by the treatment of sins as crimes in the civil courts. On the other hand, however indulgent public opinion may be towards individual cases of suicide, I suspect that for various reasons it remains deeply disapproving of the act itself. Save where the act of suicide seeks to avoid degrading and incurable physical or mental disease, it seldom commands admiration however it may be condoned. The personal ethical philosophies and codes of honour of a

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*Greek Civilization* covers the period of growth from Homer to Pericles, and the emerging glory of the Greek achievement is constantly seen against the background of social struggle through which this remarkable people worked its way towards a system of popular sovereignty. Professor Bonnard describes and analyses the Iliad and the Odyssey, the status of Greek women, Greek religion, and the problems of destiny and justice, etc. *Book Society Recommendation. Illustrated. About 30s.*

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democracy are unlikely to exalt suicide to the status of a virtue. Indeed in the modern Western world even the anti-democratic, aristocratically inclined are liable to be emotionally hostile to the suicide's weakness of "life force" or intellectually impatient of the immoderate sense of proportion implied in suicide. For the less reflective, whose moral code still rests shakily upon a half-forgotten débris of Christian conscience, suicide still retains some of its aura of blasphemous horror, though they may be unaware of the theological origin of this emotion. For the respectable classes the subject of suicide has an additional tabu, for it is among those few crimes by which the weaker members of respectable families are likely to bring their relatives into conflict with the law. Nevertheless, I doubt if there is any of the innate disgust towards suicide which many feel for other crimes which we inherit from Canon Law. It is more likely that suicide remains a tabu subject because in a world where despair lies so near to the crust, it is an act that comes too near home. It is fortunate, then, that this theological veto should be so firmly and traditionally entrenched in our criminal law, for to justify its inclusion on non-theological grounds would entail a concept of the state and its duty repugnant to the English liberal conscience.

This discussion of the contemporary English attitude to suicide, and the tacit wish to retain criminal liability for it, is relevant to a review of Dr. Sainsbury's study,\* because it is notable that even in this statistical approach to the ecology of suicide the assumption is always present that suicide is an absolute social evil and consequently that a traditional morality which discourages suicide under any circumstances is desirable, however the psychiatrist or social worker may regard individual attempted suicides as "case work." And this assumption lies deeper, I think, than the usual inclination of the psychiatrist towards the conventional social norm. It is a general assumption the more striking because Dr. Sainsbury otherwise so rigidly confines himself to the exact scope of his statistics.

THE purpose of his analysis is to throw further light upon the social causes of suicide. It is only incidentally that we may learn of the extent of suicide in London, although the small number of suicides—the highest figure in the years given (1929–48) is 761—must inevitably make easier the general wish to ignore the subject. London indeed is only the guinea-pig of the inquiry which Dr. Sainsbury relates to

various earlier analyses made in cities of the United States and to the general French survey of Durkheim. The author has based his analysis on the suicide rates of the Metropolitan boroughs and the City between 1929 and 1933, and has correlated these rates with the indices of certain social characteristics which earlier studies in other countries have indicated as significant. He has further validated his conclusions by an analysis of 409 suicides reported to the North London coroner (an area containing two of the boroughs with the highest rates) during 1936–8. The general conclusion shows that incidence of suicide is highest in those areas where social disorganisation and consequently social isolation are highest. It confirms that poverty and suicide are not related, though it suggests that economic distress following comparative security is closely connected with suicide. It confirms previous surveys in showing that men are more liable to commit suicide than women. Since it does not deal with attempted suicide it can throw no light on the interesting contention of some foreign workers in the field that women are more liable to fail in their attempts. It confirms too that middle-aged and old people are more likely to take their lives than the young. It suggests that the atmosphere of hotels, lodging houses, and boarding houses are likely to increase the will towards suicide, but does not accept the view that those with suicidal tendencies migrate to such places. If, in general, it concludes that loneliness is the primary cause of suicide, the familiarity of this statement does not of course make the statistical support which Dr. Sainsbury produces any the less valuable.

There are, however, certain points in Dr. Sainsbury's work which would seem to merit more consideration than he gives them. For example, the boroughs with the highest suicide rate, not only over the years he selects but in other years since 1919, are Hampstead, St. Pancras, Marylebone, Paddington, Westminster, Chelsea, Kensington, Holborn, the City, and Shoreditch. Now all these boroughs fall into the category of socially disorganised areas that he describes—though the City is surely of quite a different nature from the others—except Shoreditch. This exception Dr. Sainsbury merely notes, adding that it borders the other areas, but so do Stepney and Bethnal Green which have low suicide rates. This apparent contradiction of Shoreditch should surely have received special investigation if Dr. Sainsbury's conclusions are not to be tempered with an unsatisfactory mystery. Then again the author says nothing of the German refugees who were so important, surely, in Hampstead and Holborn during the years of his study. And it also seems insufficient to note that the black boroughs contain the main

\* *Suicide in London*. By PETER SAINSBURY. Institute of Psychiatry. 17s. 6d.

railway stations: it would surely have been possible to find out whether those who committed suicide in the hotels around the main termini were really socially disorganised people or persons from secure family areas who chose the station areas solely for suicide. If the latter were true much of the author's careful arguments would be invalidated. Finally the American studies of suicide showed that working-class areas produced a high rate of suicide while this study of London shows that such areas are largely immune. It is not enough, I think, to explain this contradiction as Dr. Sainsbury does by saying that in America the socially disorganised migrate to working-class areas whereas in England they do not.

IN GENERAL, careful and exact though the author is, *Suicide in London* does too often suggest an analysis which has been carefully limited to verify conclusions already reached. The truth is, I suspect, that by emphasising so

strongly the more easily verifiable social circumstances, Dr. Sainsbury underplays the less determinable personal causes. I lived most of my youth in the hotels and boarding houses he describes and the impression remains with me that although the population had exactly the sort of susceptible, socially isolated characteristics he describes, the factor that caused one individual to break and another to survive related exactly to the response they showed to the hotel or lodging-house community code and, particularly, to gossip. Only a more detailed study of the cases in question, and of their personal backgrounds, would, I suspect, produce the answer to the really interesting social question he does not ask. What is the difference between the pressure of social opinion towards conformity among the lonely who are congregated in lodgings and hotels, and the equally strong social pressure to conform in respectable family areas, that produces instability in the one area and stability in the other?

Angus Wilson

## THE WHITE MAN'S PRIDE

WRITERS of books on the colonies are at a special disadvantage nowadays. Things move too rapidly for them. No sooner is the printer's ink dry on their careful description of a new constitution, or political movement, or an event or conference which seemed momentous at the time, than the constitution is scrapped, the political movement supplanted by another, the conference forgotten, the event submerged beneath a dozen new events. This, certainly, is the unhappy fate of much of George Padmore's book,\* which already bears a curiously archaic stamp. Who now remembers the Pan-African conference held in Manchester in 1945, of which Padmore was one of the organisers and to which he attributes such tremendous implications? Who is interested in the Richards constitution for Nigeria, which has since been supplanted by a couple of other constitutions, none of which will matter all that much when Nigeria achieves self-government next year?

Nor is it only that events move too rapidly for the author's pen; they move far too rapidly for some authors' minds. And the writers most likely to be left behind are those, like George Padmore, who were once Communists, who have revolted against Communist conduct and cynicism, but can never free themselves from Communist

ideology. For such men, no matter what happens in fact, in theory certain truths remain for ever unassailable. For Padmore, a basic "ideological principle" is that "the object of imperialist powers is to exploit"; all imperialist powers are hypocrites who fail to match deeds with words; white socialists are as bad as conservatives; "the chains of servitude still hang around the necks" of all Africans; the West still represents "an unbridled system of monopoly capitalism," and so on and so forth. Colony after colony can attain independence, socialist governments can fulfil their promises, the imperialism of a generation back can be metamorphosed, and economic systems undergo remarkable changes—it all makes no difference. Everything has to be fitted into the Procrustean bed of Marxist analysis.

In other words, this is an infuriating book. Why bother then to review it? Because, embedded in all the jargon, there are certain truths, and because it represents a certain way of looking at things which is, unfortunately, only too important in the world today. Padmore's thesis is that Communism is not an immediate threat in Africa today; intelligent Africans are wise to the way they have been used by Communists for the ends of Soviet foreign policy, and they are immensely resentful of it. But unless the West sloughs off its imperialist attitudes, recognises colonial aspirations to freedom, gives massive economic aid without strings, Africans may in

\* *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* By GEORGE PADMORE. Dennis Dobson. 25s.

# Robert Graves

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despair turn to Communism as the lesser of two evils. In this thesis, truth may well reside. And, indeed, many of us are quite as aware of it as Padmore himself. What is so disturbing is that, tied up with the enunciation of this truth, is the complete failure of so many African and Asian intellectuals to recognise and admit the changes that are daily taking place in Africa, to appreciate how far the old imperialist leopard is indeed changing his spots—never mind whether voluntarily or through the compulsion of world history. Must we always remain “the imperialists” whose one object is “to exploit”? Can we never be anything but hypocrites?

It would be tempting to dismiss this corroding suspicion of ourselves as the hangover of Marxist teaching, as in some cases it undoubtedly is. But that is too superficial as a universal explanation. It always seems to me amazing, for instance, to meet intelligent Indian socialists, who are certainly not Marxists themselves, and who are full of respect for the way Britain withdrew from their own country, but who nevertheless continue to think of us as deeply tarred with the imperialist brush, and to condemn—without attempting to appreciate the real problems—the continuation of British rule anywhere. And one has only to think back to the Bandoeng con-

ference, and the intense hostility to the West displayed there by representatives of some dozens of “coloured” nations, to get the measure of what we have to grapple with. Yet here we are, in the act of granting independence to the Gold Coast and Nigeria, helping to create what will soon be an independent Caribbean Federation, an independent Malayan Federation, an independent Singapore. Why, then, this burning distrust? We must ask ourselves why.

I suppose there are many answers. Our imperialist past is still all too recent, and some of it still is—if we are honest—not past but present, whatever the excuses for its presence may be. Our attempts at economic assistance have been tainted by tying them up with military alignments, which are important enough to our minds, but irrelevant to theirs. Our talk of democracy and freedom, as the reason for our opposition to Communism, has a nasty ring in their ears as long as there are still nations in Africa and Asia under Western rule which know neither democracy nor freedom. Our superior wealth is a continuing reproach against ourselves—seen in the context of their poverty. But most of all, it is, I think, our attitudes. We fail to release ourselves from our own sense of superiority. We are the people with the money, with the “know-how,” with the superior “Western values” and religion; God is in the image of the white man; if we help another race for purposes other than “to exploit,” it is so that he may become more like ourselves. This is what is so intolerable. It maddens other peoples to the point of rejecting us outright—us, and all our works, however good. Somehow the Communists seem able to avoid this impression on the coloured races of insufferable spiritual pride; if pushed to the extreme choice, it is therefore to the Communists that they may prefer to turn.

When Padmore talks of “Pan-Africanism” he really means, so far as I can make out, African nationalism with a kind of socialist gloss. Fair enough. But of course no nationalism, particularly not in small and poor countries, is a complete answer to any nation's problems in the modern world. We may grant “independence” right and left, but that will not end their headaches or our responsibilities. We are all too closely knit together—for trade, for economic development, for defence, even in our intermingling cultures. The problem of “coming to terms” will be with us for as far ahead as anyone can see. And it is precisely in this coming to terms, as human beings, where we continue to fail. I think this is what this book really means to convey; it is a pity that it is written in so antagonising an idiom.

Rita Hinden



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## ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

MICHAEL POLYANI has combined in one lifetime three distinguished careers: as a scientist, an economist, a philosopher. He was born in Budapest in 1891, studied physical chemistry, and in 1923 was appointed a member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin—an appointment which was made a lifetime one in 1929. During this period, he acquired an international reputation by his investigations of the structure of metals, the mechanism of chemical reactions, and the absorption of gases by porous bodies. In 1933, he resigned his post in protest against the German Government's anti-Jewish legislation, and was invited to the Chair of Physical Chemistry in Manchester, which he has occupied ever since. The depression turned his attention to economics, and the result was a diagrammatic film on "Money and Unemployment" that is still being used in popular education, as well as books on *Patent Reform* (1944) and *Full Employment and Free Trade* (1945). For the past decade, his interests have been mainly philosophical, as represented by his two books *Science, Faith, and Society* (1946) and *The Logic of Liberty* (1951). He is at present completing a book on *Personal Knowledge*, representing the Gifford Lectures he delivered in 1951 at the University of Aberdeen. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1943. For the past three years, he has been Chairman of the Science and Freedom Committee of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

MAURICE CRANSTON was born in London in 1920. He was educated in country day-schools, at Oxford, and abroad. He has for several years combined the work of a literary journalist with scholarly research, notably on Locke, of whom he has written a full-scale biography, to be published by Longmans in March. He was drawn to Locke by a sympathy for Locke's liberalism and empiricism and he is himself the author of a well-received book, *On Freedom*; but though his politics are of the *Manchester Guardian* kind, and his philosophical reviews have been much influenced by the new school

of philosophical analysis, he has more conservative tastes in literature and art; he is an stringent critic of all self-consciously "contemporary" things. His field as a student of the history of ideas is wide; and besides many broadcast talks, he has written one or two notable features for the Third Programme of the BBC.

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:— MARY CECIL now lives in Birmingham, where she is putting the finishing touches to a novel. . . . LIONEL TRILLING's article on Santayana is included in his most recent collection of critical essays, *A Gathering of Fugitives*, which has just been issued by Beacon Press in Boston. . . . GORE VIDAL wrote his first novel in 1946, at the age of twenty. He has since gone on to reveal himself to be one of the most talented and prolific of the post-war generation of American writers. . . . WILLIAM FLOMER has just returned from South Africa, which he visited for the first time in thirty years. He went there at the invitation of the University of the Witwatersrand to take part in a literary conference. His latest book of ballads, *A Shot in the Park*, was published by Jonathan Cape last year. . . . DWIGHT MACDONALD's "Reflections" will henceforth be a regular feature of ENCOUNTER. Shortly after delivering his copy, Mr. Macdonald left for a peaceful trip to, of all places, Cairo. We hope to have, in our next issue, an eye-witness report by him on recent events in that city. . . . GEORGE MIKES is well known to our readers for his sprightly travelogues. As has been reported in the British press, the publication of his most recent book, *Italy for Beginners*, provoked a challenge to a duel from an Italian nobleman. Mr. Mikes naturally accepted, and chose sabres in St. James' Park. But cooler tempers soon prevailed, and this bloody international incident was averted. . . . PROFESSOR A. J. AYER, of the University of London, has recently published *The Problem of Knowledge* (Macmillan). . . . RITA HINDEN is the editor of *Socialist Commentary* and is also honorary secretary of the Fabian Colonial Bureau.

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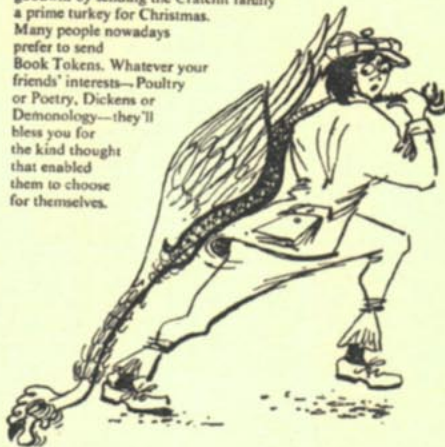
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